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Friends, Society of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

CHRISTIAN ADVICES

ISSUED BY

THE YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS

HELD IN

PHILADELPHIA.

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The following extracts have been compiled for the benefit of the members of our Yearly Meeting, that observing the travail of the Church under various concerns, which in divine wisdom have been communicated for its weighty attention, they may be drawn to the principle of Life and Light [the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ] manifested in the mind, which points out the path of duty, and can alone preserve therein.

Our ancient Friends, and their faithful successors to the present day, have earnestly laboured to turn the attention of all to this pure Spirit; knowing from experience that it is the means appointed by God for effecting our salvation, and the only foundation of all true religion and worship. As by this we have been led into divers testimonies which have distinguished us from most other professors of the Christian name, we fervently desire that all our members may walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing; thus every one filling his place in the body, we shall grow up into Him in all things who is the Head, even Christ.

Meeting for Sufferings, Philadelphia,
Twelfth Month, 16th, 1808.

MINUTE OF 1879.

At a Meeting for Sufferings, held in Philadelphia, the 18*th day of Fourth month,* 1879.

The Committee appointed at a former meeting to examine the minutes of the Yearly Meeting, and select therefrom such paragraphs as may advantageously be introduced into the Book of Advices, produced some extracts from the minutes, which were read and united with. The Book Committee are requested to print a new edition of the Advices, and insert therein the passages now approved.

Extract from the Minutes.

INTRODUCTION.

As it hath pleased the Lord in these latter days, by his spirit and power, to gather a people to himself; and, releasing them from the impositions and teachings of men, to inspire them with degrees of the same universal love and good will by which the dispensation of the gospel was ushered in, these have been engaged to meet together for the worship of God in spirit, according to the direction of the holy Lawgiver; as also for the exercise of a tender care over each other, that all may be preserved in unity of faith and practice, answerable to the description which He, the ever-blessed Shepherd, gave of his flock; "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John xiii. 35.

For this important end, and as an exterior hedge of preservation to us against the many

temptations and dangers to which our situation in this world exposes us, rules for the government of the Society have been made and approved from time to time, and now form our code of discipline. In the exercise whereof it is to be observed, that if any member be found in a conduct subversive of its order, or repugnant to the religious principles and testimonies which we believe we are intrusted with for the promotion of truth and righteousness in the earth, it becomes our indispensable duty to treat with such in meekness and brotherly compassion, without unnecessary delay or improper exposure; according to the direction of our Lord to his Church: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen-man and a publican." Matthew, chap. xviii. 15, 16, 17.

This is the extent of the Society's censure against irreclaimable offenders,—they are disowned as members of our religious community; which is recommended to be done in such a disposition of mind as may convince them that we sincerely desire their recovery and restoration, considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted. Gal. vi. 1.

For the more regular and effectual support of this order of the Society, beside the usual meetings for the purpose of Divine worship, others are instituted. These meetings have all distinct allotments of service; and as experience shows that when this service is attended to in uprightness and dedication of heart, with a single eye to the honour of our holy Head, and the help and edification of one another, in the love wherewith he has loved us, our assemblies are often favoured with his aid and direction; Friends are affectionately desired and exhorted to be diligent in the attendance of them; and when met, to humbly seek to be clothed with the spirit of wisdom and charity: this will divest the mind of a dependence on our own strength and abilities, endue us with patience and condescension

towards each other; and being preserved in fellowship agreeably to our Lord's declaration, "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," a qualification will be experienced in our several stations and movements, to build up one another in that faith which works by love to the purifying of the heart.

So may we be living members of the Church militant on earth, and inhabitants of that city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder the Lord is; knowing indeed with exceeding joy that great is He, the Holy One of Israel, in the midst of her.

CHRISTIAN ADVICES.

BOOKS.

This meeting doth earnestly exhort all parents, heads of families, and guardians of minors, that they prevent, as much as in them lies, their children, and others under their care and tuition, from having or reading books and papers tending to prejudice the profession of the Christian religion, to create the least doubt concerning the authenticity and Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, or of those saving truths declared in them; lest their infant and feeble minds should be poisoned thereby, and a foundation laid for the greatest evils. And it is earnestly recommended to every member of our religious Society, that they discourage and suppress the reading of plays, romances, novels, or other pernicious books, which evidently tend to strengthen the corrupt propensities of our nature,

to give the mind false ideas of pleasure and happiness, and to disincline it to virtuous and praiseworthy pursuits. And printers and booksellers, in profession with us, are cautioned against printing, selling or lending such books; as it is a practice so inconsistent with the purity of the Christian religion. And Friends are desired to be careful in the choice of books in which their children and families read, seeing there are many under the specious titles of promoting religion and morality, which contain sentiments repugnant to the truth in Christ Jesus.—1764.

Another great evil of the present time, is the flood of light literature pouring almost daily from the press. Many of the publications, even some that profess to be promotive of morality, are of a mixed character, truth and fiction being artfully blended together, and an attraction thrown around the whole which easily captivates the unguarded. It is cause of regret to observe books of this description upon the tables of some of our members; and we fear the perusal of them, and the taste for this flimsy and pernicious reading, are on the increase. We believe its tendency is decidedly evil, creating a

disrelish for the practical duties and sober realities of life, dissipating the energies of the mind, and habituating it to a state of excitement which is unfavourable to calm and serious reflection. It creates, moreover, a distaste for profitable reading, and a morbid appetite for that which stimulates the imagination, rendering religious meditation and solid thoughtfulness irksome and repulsive. We affectionately exhort all our members not only to avoid such reading themselves, but to discountenance it in others; and especially to restrain the children and youth from the pernicious effects of this practice, endeavouring to cultivate in their minds a love for instructive reading, and such as will lead to the contemplation of heavenly things.

It is a day in which the spirit of infidelity in various delusive forms is captivating many, by setting them to investigate the groundless pretensions of unstable men to some new discovery of truth, with which the father of lies is seeking to lay waste the unchangeable doctrines of the gospel, and faith in the alone means of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. The prevalent opinion that it is a period for inquiry and re-

search, and that before any scheme, however absurd, is rejected, it ought to be examined; may lead young and inexperienced persons to venture upon investigations which they may think themselves competent to conduct with safety, but by which their minds may be confused and finally poisoned, to the subversion of that settled belief which they had possessed in the unalterable principles of the Christian faith, and in the reality of the Divine revelation of the Holy Spirit in the heart. When such a state of unsettlement is once produced in minds which had before entertained no doubt respecting that precious faith, it may be totally out of the power of such to restore the tranquillity and holy certainty which they had enjoyed.

The Christian has no right to tamper with the truths of Divine revelation, or the peace which he has in believing them. He wants no other gospel but the gospel of the Lord Jesus and his apostles, as testified of in the Holy Scriptures. He that partaketh of the muddy streams of mystery Babylon, will thirst again after some other false theory or speculation; but our blessed Lord said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a

well of water, springing up into everlasting life." Here is your place of safety, dear young Friends, in a holy reliance upon your omnipotent Saviour, who, as you are faithful and chaste to him, will give you that saving faith which is and ever has been the saint's victory over all the delusions and snares of the devil. Avoid listening to the sophistry of free-thinkers and unbelievers, and refuse to read any of those pernicious publications that pretend to set forth new discoveries in religion, or in any wise assail the doctrines of Christianity, for they are the fruits of the clouded imaginations of bewildered men, who are deceivers and being deceived. "Their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter; their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps." Be frequent in reading the Holy Scriptures, and the approved writings of Friends, with minds turned to the Lord for the illumination of his Holy Spirit, and he will instruct and defend you; and as you persevere in following your Saviour, he will give you the bread of life, and build you up upon the Rock against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.—1853.

The reading of pernicious books is a source of much danger, particularly to young persons. There are some pretending to advocate the cause of religion, which tend to settle the reader in a mere belief in the outward coming of Christ, yet overlooking his spiritual appearance in the heart, and the work of regeneration by his Holy Spirit, without which our Lord declared, that no man can see the Kingdom of God. These, we believe, are instrumental in obstructing the work of religion, and the spreading of the reign of the Prince of Peace. We would affectionately press upon all our members, to keep upon their guard against these insidious attempts to draw the mind away from submission to the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which their Saviour would effect in their hearts. Dear young Friends, love retirement, as at his feet, that you may be taught by Him. Frequently read the Holy Scriptures and the writings of your own Society; which would, as you obey the Truth, strengthen you to turn your back upon all the seductions of Satan, the corrupting amusements of the day, and the attractions to mingle with those who are enemies to the cross of Christ. Re-

ligion is an inward work; and all who really know it abide with their Lord, both in his sufferings, and when his banner over them is felt to be love.—1860.

BURIALS.

As those who attend Burials may sometimes come from far, and be in need of bodily refreshment, it is earnestly advised that when this is really necessary it may be taken in moderation; and that Friends be careful to demean themselves with gravity and decency, remembering that such seasons especially ought never to be perverted into opportunities for intemperance or levity. And it is desired that when anything unseemly appears, the offenders may be taken aside and tenderly admonished, that so everything tending to lessen the solemnity of such occasions may be avoided.

Advised, that Friends be careful themselves, and discourage their children, from attending the worship of those not in communion with us, and particularly at burials; seeing that in so doing there is a danger either of balking their

testimony for the truth and wounding their own minds, or giving unnecessary offence to their sober neighbours.

Friends are advised against imitating the vain custom of wearing or giving mourning habits, and against affixing any monuments of wood or stone to graves, and all extravagant expenses about the interment of the dead.

And it is recommended that at all our interments, time be allowed for a solemn pause, both before and after the corpse is put into the ground. —1808.

This meeting has been brought under much concern in consequence of the increased expensiveness and show, which are gradually obtaining a place among Friends at the time of burials. It is painful to observe, in some instances, the costliness of the materials, and the unsuitableness of the attire, in which the lifeless body is arrayed, as if to make it a spectacle for beholders, and to gratify the pride of the living; the needless expense in making and lining the coffin; the unnecessarily long train of carriages which follow it to the place of interment, and sometimes the large entertainment afterward;

as though it was intended to make the occasion one of vain show, instead of a solemn opportunity, the effect of which should be to humble us, under a sense of our own mortality, and to subdue every disposition which could be gratified by display. We believe these things are not only unbecoming so serious an occasion, but inconsistent with that Christian simplicity and moderation to which we are called; and we would affectionately caution our members against them.

It has also been cause of concern, to observe that some of our members, not duly regarding the ancient and approved practice of our Society, have procured places of interment which are not under the control of Friends, and where customs are sanctioned which are at variance with our well-known testimonies. We apprehend this is opening a door to weakness, and preparing the way for departures from those salutary restraints which in the wisdom of Truth have been placed around our members, and which have so evidently tended to preserve them in a conformity to our religious principles and practices. We would therefore tenderly entreat Friends to avoid the entangling effects

consequent upon such a course, and be willing to conform to the regulations of the Society in this respect.

The introduction of monuments of wood or stone into our grave-yards, has at this time claimed renewed attention; and, agreeably to former recommendations, we are again engaged to discourage the practice, and request meetings to carry into effect, in the spirit of Christian love, and as far as they have control of the burying-grounds, the advice heretofore given on this subject, as contained in the discipline. We trust also that all our dear Friends will receive the word of tender admonition, and refrain from everything which is contrary to our ancient testimony on this subject.—1854.

Our members are tenderly advised and cautioned against a growing tendency in the present day to conform to the ways and customs of the world, in relation to the expensive coffin, habiliments and floral decorations bestowed upon the perishable body upon the occasion of its burial. The desire was expressed, that in reference to the two first-named departures from simplicity on these solemn occasions, we

may let our moderation be more fully known to all men; and that the other practice intended or calculated to drown solemn thoughts of death and the grave, may be withstood by all our members.—1877.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

A FERVENT concern prevailing for the preservation of our members in a faithful maintenance of our religious testimonies, it is desired that all may be drawn to deep inward watchfulness against every presentation, either for acquiring gain by trade and commerce dependent on war, or the attainment of worldly honour in accepting of posts or offices in civil government, which often expose to the violation of divers testimonies, particularly that respecting oaths.—1808.

Liberty of conscience being the common right of all men, and particularly essential to the well being of religious Societies, we hold it to be indispensably incumbent upon us to maintain it inviolably among ourselves; and therefore advise and exhort all in profession with us to de-

cline the acceptance of any office or station in civil government, the duties of which are inconsistent with our religious principles, or in the exercise of which they may be, or think themselves to be, under the necessity of exacting of their brethren any compliances against which we are conscientiously scrupulous.—1710, 1762.

It is also the sense and judgment of this meeting, that Friends ought not in any wise to be active or accessary in electing, or promoting to be elected, their brethren to such offices or stations in civil government, the execution whereof tends to lay waste our Christian testimony, or to subject their brethren or others to sufferings on account of their conscientious scruples.—1762.

It is earnestly desired and recommended that the members of our religious Society may maintain an inoffensive, circumspect demeanour towards all men, manifesting in their lives and conversation a subjection to the peaceable spirit of Christ, which will preserve from giving just occasion of offence to any; and from being betrayed into those heats and controversies which frequently prevail respecting the policies and

governments of this world. For as we are called to show forth in life and practice our belief that the peaceful reign of the Messiah is begun in the earth, and will advance to its designed completion, when, according to the prophecies of Isaiah and Micah, "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more," so we cannot be concerned in any combinations of a hostile nature, nor oppose those under whose outward government we are providentially placed; nor can we unite with or encourage such as revile or asperse them; but, remembering that the Lord ruleth over the kingdoms of men, we should patiently resign ourselves to the dispensations of his wisdom and power, and seek to be endued with the spirit of prayer and supplication for all men, that we may be permitted to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. "For this," as said the apostle, "is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."

CONDUCT AND CONVERSATION.

It is desired that Friends may be guarded in their conduct at all times and on all occasions, that no stumbling-block be laid in the way of honest inquirers after truth, nor offence given to tender minds under convincement. "Let your light," said Christ, "so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Our moderation and prudence, as well as truth and justice, should appear in trading and commerce, in speech and communication, in eating and drinking, in habit and furniture, and in all things; that, as we profess to be a spiritually-minded people, we may manifest by a meek and quiet spirit that we are bounded by the cross of Christ, and concerned to show forth the excellency of that Divine principle, by a conversation every way agreeable thereunto.—1808.

It is the earnest concern of this meeting, that in all our dealings and transactions among men,

strict justice may be observed, and that no motives of pecuniary interest may induce any of our members to impose on each other, or on others.—1778, 1834.

Let your words be few and savoury, observing the precept of the apostle, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." So may your good example, and the gravity and circumspection of your conduct and behaviour, minister just rebuke to those who know not a bridle to their tongues, and who seem not sufficiently aware, "that in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin."

It is worthy of general remembrance, that no affectation of singularity was the cause of a demeanour both civil and religious in our forefathers, or in the faithful of this day, different in many respects from the conduct of those among whom we dwell; but they, beholding the vanity, unprofitableness, and insincerity of the salutations, customs, and fashions of the world, and regarding the examples of our blessed Saviour and his followers, with the frequent testimonies recorded in Holy Writ to the necessity of a self-denying life and conversation, together with the

law and testimony revealed in their hearts, retained in view the injunction of the apostle, Not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind, that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. May an uprightness of heart, as in the sight of God, ever attend this simplicity of appearance; that none, by a conduct inconsistent therewith, may furnish occasion for the testimony to be evilly spoken of or despised.

God, who is the creator of man, and he to whom he oweth the dedication both of soul and body, is over all to be worshipped and adored, and that not only by the spirit, but also with the prostration of the body. Now kneeling, bowing, and uncovering the head, is the alone outward signification of our adoration towards God, and therefore it is not lawful to give it unto man. He that kneeleth or prostrates himself to man, what doth he more to God? He that boweth and uncovereth his head to the creature, what hath he reserved to the Creator? Since, therefore, all the duties of the different relations under which we may be stated, may be performed one to another without those kind

of bowings, they are therefore no essential part of our duty to man, but to God.

The world, in its degeneracy from God, is as much out of the way as to true honour and respect, as in other things; much of which is as the apostle speaks of science. They are honours and respects falsely so called, having nothing of the nature of true honour and respect in them; but as degenerate men, loving to be honoured, first devised them, so pride only loves and seeks them.

Some of the reasons which have engaged us to decline the practice of the present customs of pulling off the hat, bowing the body or knee, and giving people gaudy titles and epithets in our salutations and addresses, are, that savour, sight, and sense that God, by his light and Spirit, has given us of the world's apostasy from him, and the cause and effects of that great and lamentable defection; in the discovery of which the sense of our own state came first before us, and we were made to see Him whom we had pierced, and to mourn for it. Now every word, thought, and deed was brought to judgment, the root examined, and its tendency considered; and by knowing the evil leaven and its evil effects

in ourselves, we came to have a sense and knowledge of the states of others; the present honours and respects of the world became burdensome to us; we saw they had no being in paradise; that they grew in the night-time, and came from an evil root; that they only delighted a vain and ill mind, and that much pride and folly was in them. We honour those that are placed in authority over us; our parents, our masters, our magistrates, our landlords, one another; yea, all men, after God's way, used by holy men and women of old time; but we cannot esteem bows, titles, and pulling off of hats to each other, to be real honours, because such like customs have been prohibited by God, his Son, and servants in days past. Christ said to the Jews, "How can ye believe, that receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" and charged his disciples, "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. Neither be ye called master; but he that is greatest among you shall be your servant, and whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased." These passages carry a severe rebuke both to worldly honour in general, and to those members and expressions

of it in particular which, as near as the language of Scripture and customs of that age will permit, do distinctly reach and allude to those of our own time.

Our non-conformity to the world in using the word "thou" for "you," when addressing an individual, hath the same original as the foregoing. Words, of themselves, are but as so many marks set and employed for necessary and intelligible mediums, whereby men may understandingly express their minds and conceptions to each other. Though the world be divided into many nations, each of which, for the most part, has its peculiar language or dialect, yet they ever concurred in the same numbers and persons, as forming much of the ground of right speech. "Thou" and "thee," when speaking to one, and "ye" or "you," to more than one, is according to plain grammar rule; and it would be impossible to preserve numbers if "you" be used to express one. But it is a most extravagant piece of pride in a mortal man to require or expect from his fellow-creature a more grateful language than he is wont to give to Almighty God, his Creator, in all his worship to him;

and since we are persuaded that its original was from pride and flattery, we cannot use it.

And however we may be censured as singular by those loose and airy minds that consider not the true rise and tendency of words and things, yet to us, whom God has convinced by his light and spirit in our hearts, of the folly and evil of such courses, and brought us into a spiritual discerning of the nature and ground of the world's fashions, they appear to be the fruits of pride and flattery; and we dare not continue in such vain compliances to earthly minds, lest we offend God and burden our own consciences, knowing assuredly that for every idle word that men speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment.

Frequent waiting in stillness on the Lord for renewal of strength, keeps the mind at home in its proper place and duty, and out of all unprofitable conversation and converse, whether amongst those of our own or other professions.

Much hurt may accrue to the religious mind by long and frequent conversation on temporal matters, especially by interesting ourselves unnecessarily in them; for there is a leaven in that propensity which, being suffered to prevail,

indisposes and benumbs the soul, and prevents its frequent ascendings in living aspirations towards the Fountain of eternal life.

Whatever exercises we may meet with on account of a faithful testimony to the truth in all godliness of conversation, and to the end that we may not faint in our minds, let us consider the Captain of our salvation, who endured the contradiction of sinners, bearing his cross and despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of God, where he continually maketh intercession for us; that following him, and under his banner fighting the good fight of faith, we may finally obtain the crown of righteousness which fadeth not away.—1808.

In viewing the state of our members and subordinate meetings, an earnest concern has been felt that we should duly estimate and give heed to the blessed gospel truth ever held by Friends, that Christ is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. As this "Light of Christ within" is regarded, and its manifestations obeyed, the understanding will be opened to receive the doctrines of the gospel, and the testimonies springing from

them, and the obligation will be felt to maintain them in life and conversation. This Divine gift brings those who submit to its teachings not only to believe the sacred truths declared in the Holy Scriptures respecting our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the means provided in the mercy of God for the salvation of men, but also gives an insight of the corruption of the heart in its unregenerate condition, of man's need of a Redeemer, and the purifying baptisms of the Holy Ghost and fire; and as it is followed, it produces the blessed fruits of righteousness and peace. As the members are individually engaged to walk in this Holy light they will be brought to see, eye to eye, and have "fellowship one with another, and to know the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse them from all sin." Thus holding "The Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together," we would "increase with the increase of God." We would be brought willingly and gladly, to attend all our meetings for worship, and for the transaction of the affairs of the Church; and when in them would be preserved from giving way to drowsiness, the frequent occurrence of

which, in our meetings, continues to be a source of much exercise and sorrow, manifesting, as it does, spiritual slothfulness. In the language of George Fox, we would affectionately exhort all to "Take heed of sleeping in meetings, and of dulness. For it is an unsavory thing to see one sitting nodding in meeting, and so lose the sense of the Lord's presence. It is a shame and a sadness both, and it grieveth the upright and watchful that wait upon the Lord, to see such things."—1870.

While the mere natural wisdom and will of man have no place in the church of Christ, we would tenderly encourage the rightly concerned in our Meetings for Discipline, who may be entrusted with a sentiment on the business before such meetings, to be simple, honest and faithful in giving expression to it in the fear of the Lord, and in the obedience of faith in Him, yielding themselves up to the service that may be required at their hands. This is the way that the talent committed is to be used and occupied with, and it is the way to peace and enlargement—being faithful in a little, we shall be made rulers over more.

Our Yearly Meeting in 1795, declared its judgment in the following minute of advice: "We are concerned that the management of our Christian discipline, be not committed to hands unclean, particularly of such who allow undue liberties in their own children and families. 'If a man,' said the apostle, 'know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God.'" [1795.] It has been a cause of sorrow to observe, that in some meetings, those are occasionally appointed to stations or employed in services, who make no appearance of being Friends, and whose manner of life is not in accordance with our distinguishing doctrines and testimonies. Herein the precious cause we are called to uphold and promote must suffer.—1874.

DAYS AND TIMES.

Advised, that Friends be exemplary in keeping to our ancient testimony against the superstitious observation of days; and to the simplicity of truth in calling the days and months by Scripture names, and not by those of the heathen.

The children of Israel, the people whom God chose out of all the families of the earth to place his name among, and to make himself known unto, were strictly commanded not only to abstain from the idolatrous practices of the nations in the midst of whom they dwelt, but were enjoined to be "circumspect in all things that the Lord commanded," and even to "make no mention of the names of other gods, neither to let it be heard out of their mouth." This injunction was a perpetual command and standing ordinance in honour of the one Almighty Being, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, and as such ought to be regarded by us, and by all the

generations of those who with the heart believe, as well as with the tongue confess, "that the Lord he is God, and that there is none else besides him;" who hath declared, "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Convinced of this everlasting truth, both by the testimony of the Scriptures and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, which leads those who are faithful to its teachings from everything, either in word or deed, that would dishonour the truth, our ancient Friends were conscientiously concerned to refrain from the use of those names of months and days which the heathens had given to the idols they worshipped; and this concern rested upon them from a firm persuasion that the glorious gospel-day was come wherein the Lord was fulfilling his covenant with Israel, viz.: "I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name." Consistently with this testimony, the following account of the origin of the names of some of the months of the year, and of all the days of the week as now commonly used, is recommended to the serious consideration of our members.

1. January was so called from Janus, an ancient king of Italy, whom heathenish superstition had deified, to whom a temple was built, and this month dedicated.

2. February was so called from Februa, a word denoting purgation by sacrifices; it being usual in this month for the priests of the heathen god, Pan, to offer sacrifices and perform certain rites, conducing, as was supposed, to the cleansing or purgation of the people.

3. March was so denominated from Mars, feigned to be the god of war; who Romulus, founder of the Roman empire, pretended was his father.

4. April is generally supposed to derive its name from the Greek appellation of Venus, an imaginary goddess worshipped by the Romans.

5. May is said to have been so called from Maia, the mother of Mercury, another of their pretended ethnic deities, to whom in this month they paid their devotions.

6. June is said to take its name from Juno, one of the supposed goddesses of the heathen.

7. July, so called from Julius Cæsar, one of the Roman emperors, who gave his name to this

month, which before was called Quintilis, or the fifth.

8. August, so named in honour of Augustus Cæsar, another of the Roman emperors. This month was before called Sextilis, or the sixth.*

The other four months, namely, September, October, November, and December, still retain their numerical Latin names, which, according to the late regulation of the calendar, will for the future be improperly applied. However, from the continued use of them hitherto, as well as from the practice of the Jews before the Babylonish captivity,† it seemeth highly probable that the method of distinguishing the months by their numerical order only, was the most ancient as it is the most plain, simple and rational.

As the idolatrous Romans thus gave names to several of the months in honour of their pretended deities, so the like idolatry of our Saxon ancestors induced them to call each day of the week by the name of the idol which on that day they peculiarly worshipped. Hence,

The first day of the week they called Sunday,

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* Macrob. Saturn. lib. 1, cap. 12.

† See the Scriptures to the time of Ezra.

from their customary adoration of the sun on that day.

The second day of the week they called Monday, from their worshipping the moon on that day.

The third day of the week they called Tuesday, in honour of one of their idols, called Tuisco.

The fourth day of the week was called Wednesday, from Woden, another of their idols.

The fifth day of the week was called Thursday, from their idol Thor.

The sixth day of the week was termed Friday, from Friga, an imaginary goddess by them worshipped.

The seventh day they styled Saturday, as is supposed from Saturn, or Seater, then worshipped.*

Ever since we were a people we have had a testimony against formal worship, being convinced by the precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ, the testimonies of his apostles, and our own experience, that the worship and prayers which God accepts, are such only as are produced by the influence and assistance of his Holy Spirit.

* See Verstegan and Sheringham.

We cannot, therefore, consistently unite with any in the observance of public fasts, feasts, and what they term holy days; or such injunctions and forms as are devised in man's will for Divine worship. The dispensation to which outward observances were peculiar having long since given place to the spiritual dispensation of the gospel, we believe the fast we are now called to is not the bowing of the head like a bulrush for a day, but a universal and continual fasting and refraining from everything which has a tendency to defile the soul, and unfit it for becoming the temple of the Holy Ghost; according to the injunctions of Christ to his primitive disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his daily cross, and follow me." "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." That the primitive believers saw an end to these shadows of good things, by coming to Him in whom all figures and shadows end, is evident by the words of the Apostle Paul: "For Christ," said he, "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. x. 4. "But now hath he

obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." Heb. viii. 6. "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ." Col. ii. 16, 17. And the same apostle thus expostulated with some who it appears had fallen from the true faith in these respects: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage. Ye observe days and months, and times and years: I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." Gal. iv. 9–11.

We are also religiously restrained from shutting up our doors, windows, and shops upon such days as are appointed to desire a blessing upon, and success to, the arms of the kingdom or commonwealth under which we live; nor can we give thanks, or illuminate the windows of our houses, for victories obtained by the effusion of blood; for believing that strife and contention, with everything built thereon, shall

come to an end, the continuance of those occasions must, to the truly Christian mind, be cause of deep mourning.—1808.

As we do not find any ground in Scripture for it, we cannot be so superstitious as to believe that either the Jewish Sabbath now continues, or that the first day of the week is the antitype thereof, or the true Christian Sabbath; which we believe has a more spiritual sense and signification; and therefore we know no moral obligation, by the fourth command or elsewhere, to keep the first day of the week more than any other, or that there is any holiness inherent in it. But as we believe the apostles and primitive Christians did meet on this day to worship God, so we, following their example, do the like, and forbear working or engaging in our worldly affairs upon that day. Works of charity or Christian benevolence, such as visiting and administering to the sick and afflicted, or occasions of unavoidable necessity, may sometimes interfere with, or occasion a deviation from, a strict adherence to the uses and services to which this day is specially appropriated; yet it is our continued concern affectionately to recommend to all our

members, that abstaining from bodily labour on that day, they observe and regard it as a day which, by the generality of Christians, is peculiarly set apart for religious retirement, and the performance of public worship to Almighty God.—1834.

Being well assured that the edifying practice of frequently collecting our children and families, in order for religious retirement, would be promotive of essential benefit, Friends are exhorted to seek after a right qualification, under which they may be enabled to maintain it, especially in the afternoon of the first day of the week, in such places where meetings for public worship are not held at that time; the due discharge of which duty, and solidly reading the Holy Scriptures and other religious books, with a steady, watchful care over our young people, to discourage their visiting and rambling about on that day, and mixing with unprofitable company at this and at other times, would, under the Divine blessing, be a means of their preservation out of many ensnaring temptations to which they are liable.—1834.

DEFAMATION AND DETRACTION.

Friends are exhorted to maintain always a strict watch over themselves and each other against the subtle and mischievous spirit of tale-bearing and detraction, the manifest tendency of which is to lay waste the unity of the body, by sowing the seeds of disesteem, strife, and discord among brethren and neighbours; as well as to unfit those who either propagate or listen to evil reports, for being of that service to the persons reflected upon which they might be, if the order prescribed by our blessed Lord to his Church was strictly observed, viz.: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to

hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

If thou hear a report to the disadvantage of a Friend, be careful not to report it again, but go to the person of whom the report is, and inquire if it be true or not: if it be true, deal with him or her according to the doctrine of Christ, Matt. xviii. 16, 17; but if false, then endeavour as much as thou canst to stop such report.

The preservation of love and unity is a duty in every state of religious attainment; and did we faithfully observe the great Master's precept of doing to others as we would they should do to us, the practice would be easy. Detraction and enmity would then be destroyed in the seed, and that excellent Christian charity, recommended by the apostle, prevail over all.—1808.

DISCIPLINE, AND MEETINGS FOR DISCIPLINE.

As it consisted with the will of our Heavenly Father, after he had called our primitive Friends from the various forms of religion to worship him in spirit, to lead them into the establishing and support of a Christian discipline for the help and preservation of the body in a consistency of conduct, we exhort all who are concerned in the management of the discipline, that they fervently seek to be clothed with a right mind therein, that nothing may be done through rashness, strife, or vain glory, but all with a single eye to the honour of Truth, and the good of individuals.

The more we experience a preparation of heart for the exercise of our respective gifts, the more amply shall we evince the expression of the tongue to be seasoned with that living virtue and Divine power which proceed from our holy Head, and thus, in conducting the important

concerns of society, we shall be enabled to example the beloved youth in a manner which will evidence to them, that neither tradition nor a mere outward education can fitly prepare them for successors in the Church. Upon this subject we are the more solicitous, as we believe many who were evidently under the forming hand, have been suddenly laid hold of, and introduced into service before that preparation of heart hath been sufficiently experienced, which leads to a reliance upon Divine direction, and redeems from a confidence in the natural understanding: on the other hand we believe, there has in many places been a want of care in those who are acceptably active in the discipline, rightly to distinguish, and seasonably to bring into action, the talents bestowed upon some in the early stage of life; it being truly desirable, that by a just discrimination of times and seasons, and of the qualifications bestowed, every gift may be rightly exercised, and a succession of useful members preserved in every rank in the Church.

Let an inquiry be raised in the minds of all the members of the Church, who have had any part of the Lord's work laid upon them, how they have acquitted themselves in his sight; foras-

much as a day comes on apace, in which an account of our stewardship will be required at our hands.

If the awful sense of rendering an account of our trust, and of the importance of being clear from the blood of each other were enough impressed upon all minds, the right exercise of our Christian discipline would be a means of our edification in righteousness, and of preservation from many evils of the world.

We are concerned that the management of our Christian discipline be not committed to hands unclean; particularly of such who allow or connive at undue liberties in their own children or families. "If a man," said the apostle, "know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?"—1808.

The love, power, and peaceable spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, being the alone true authority of all our meetings, it is the fervent concern of this meeting, that they may be held under the sense and influence of that holy unction.—1795.

In order to unite us more nearly one to another as members of the same body, and to

strengthen each other's hands in promoting the cause of Truth, it is recommended that Friends stand open to the leadings of the love of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord; and when in that they feel their minds drawn to sit with any of their neighbouring Monthly or Quarterly meetings, that they attend thereto, and that such meetings as are so visited, receive such in the same love, and not look upon them as intruders; thus mutual help will be given and received amongst us.

Dear Friends, be patient in the exercise of your gifts and services, and take no offence at any time because what seems to be clear to you is not presently received by others. Let all things in the Church be propounded with an awful reverence of Him who is the head and life of it; who said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" therefore let all beware of their own spirits, and keep in a gracious temper, that so they may be fitted for the service of the house of God, whose house we are if we keep upon the foundation that God hath laid; and such he will build up, and teach how to build up one another in him. And as every member must

feel life in himself and all from one Head, this life will not hurt itself in any, but be tender of itself in all; for by this one life of the Word ye were begotten, and by it ye are nourished and made to grow into your several services in the Church of God. It is no man's learning, or artificial acquirements; it is no man's riches, or greatness in this world; it is no man's eloquence or natural wisdom, that makes him fit for government in the Church of Christ: all his endowments must be seasoned with the heavenly salt, and his gifts pass through the fire of God's altar, a sacrifice to his praise and honour, that so self being baptized into death, the gifts may be used in the power of the resurrection of the life of Jesus in him.—1808.

It is advised, that where any transgress the rules of our discipline, they may, without partiality, be admonished and sought in the spirit of love and Divine charity, so that it may be seen by all, that the restoring spirit of meekness and Christian love abounds, before church censure takes place, and that a gospel spirit is the spring and motive to all our performances, as well in discipline as in worship.—1746 to 1770.

And it is further recommended, that in conducting the affairs of our meetings, as it is the Lord's work, let it be done as in his sight; thus Friends should humbly endeavour to manage them in the peaceable spirit and wisdom of Jesus, with decency, forbearance, and love of each other.—1755, 1782, 1806, 1834.

DOCTRINES.

There are influences operating in the present day, both within and without the pale of our Society, the tendency of which is to draw the members from the simplicity and spirituality of our Christian profession, and from a faithful and consistent support of the principles and testimonies of the gospel as always held by us, into a nearer conformity to the religion, the worship, and ways of the world. These influences are apparent in the same disposition to shun the daily self-denial and cross-bearing belonging to the Christian; in the effort to reduce religion very much to a formal and intellectual work, which the unaided powers of man may originate or promote; to smooth and widen

the path to salvation, so as to make it more easy and attractive to the tastes and inclinations of the unregenerate mind; and to substitute works of a benevolent or ostensibly religious character, for lowly watchful waiting, in silent introversion, at the feet of Jesus, to be taught of Him, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and who only can savingly instruct in the things which belong to the soul's peace.

The awakened mind is readily influenced by the desire to be doing something for Christ's cause, and unless it watches diligently unto prayer, in the Light of the Lord, the will of man prompts this desire into unbidden activity; takes pleasure in it; gradually dims the spiritual vision, and leads to the substitution of these formal services, for the patient abiding under the heart-changing and crucifying work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, which is in danger of settling down at ease in them.

In the feeling of Christian love and interest for all our dear Friends, and especially for the younger class, we tenderly desire that we may all diligently watch against these plausible and delusive tendencies, and strive to dwell much inward with Christ Jesus, in reverent, silent

retirement from the many alluring voices that are abroad, seeking above all to be taught of Him who is the only saving Teacher, and who will not fail to give true peace and rest to all who come to Him, take his yoke upon them, and learn of Him, who is meek and lowly of heart.

The preciousness of our testimony to the prerogative of the Head of the Church to dispense to whomsoever He will, the gift of Gospel ministry, and against all ministry originating or performed in the will and wisdom of man, has been renewedly felt at this time; having been revived by accounts received that a few of our members have not been sufficiently on their guard against lowering its importance and retarding its spread. Let us ever bear in remembrance, dear Friends, that as it is only under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit that acceptable worship can be performed, so it is alone, when by the transforming power of his grace the Head of the Church has prepared any for his service, and bestowed a special gift therefor, that true gospel ministry can be exercised; and this not in their own time and way, but when and where He freshly qualifies and appoints. Those who are thus called and

commissioned, as they wait on their holy Leader, find they have nothing of their own to glory in, for, at his command, and as He gives the matter, a necessity is laid upon them; yea, woe is unto them if they preach not the gospel. Hence they are bound freely to dispense that which they also have freely received, looking for and accepting no other reward than that given by their Master for obeying his commands.—1867.

GAMING AND DIVERSIONS.

As our time passeth swiftly away, and our delight ought to be in the law of the Lord, it is advised that a watchful care be exercised over our youth and others in membership, to prevent their going to stage-plays, horse-races, music, dancing, or any such vain sports and pastimes; and being concerned in lotteries, wagering, or other species of gaming. And as we are not only accountable for our substance, but also for our time, let them be employed in fulfilling our respective religious and social duties, remembering the injunction, "Work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work."

All parents and heads of families are exhorted to seek to be endued with the clothing of the Holy Spirit, that they may at suitable seasons be enabled to raise in the minds of the youth and those under their direction, a sense of the inexpressible comfort and delight which attends the exercise of true religion and virtue; thus they will see that the sports and diversions which are used to obtain what is falsely called pleasure, are the inventions of degenerate and corrupt minds, who being ignorant of that solid satisfaction of soul which is of an enduring nature, vainly attempt to supply the want of it by those pleasures which end in anxiety and sorrow.—1808.

Among the striking characteristics of the present day, are the instability and love of excitement which pervade the minds of the people. Many even among the professors of religion seem to be "lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God," looking abroad for sources of gratification, and eagerly pursuing anticipated pleasures, instead of endeavouring to secure from the present hour as it passes, those tranquil enjoyments which are the fruit of well doing, and to culti-

vate that retirement and mental introversion, in which we may profitably commune with our own heart and be still. One of the effects of this state of unsettlement is the great increase of public amusements and pastimes, which has latterly become so obvious; for, as "the eye is never satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing," so when the mind is let out to seek gratification in these vanities, the desire for them increases with the indulgence; and it is constantly requiring new objects to please the senses, and to fill the aching void which they leave behind them. Often, after having run the giddy round, in the vain pursuit of pleasure, there is a secret sense of bitter disappointment, and a consciousness that these empty trifles cannot satisfy the longings of an immortal mind, designed for nobler and purer enjoyments.

We apprehend that many of the lectures and readings, with other kindred exhibitions, are of latter time so mixed up with improper associations, that parents and others have need to be on their guard, lest in going themselves, or allowing their children to attend, they should be promoting a dissipation of mind, and an exposure to hurtful influences, the consequences of

which may be lastingly and injuriously felt. To say nothing of the more objectionable kinds of diversion, it is often the case that pastimes and shows, which seem at first view to be of a more innocent character, when they are strictly inquired into, are found to be attended with accompaniments which are not such as a Christian ought to countenance; and we believe there is, at the present time particularly, great need for all to be studiously watchful, how they give way to the solicitation to attend on such occasions, lest they baulk our religious profession, encourage wrong things, and thereby wound and weaken their own minds.—1853.

HIRELING MINISTRY.

Let us keep in remembrance, that it is under the immediate teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit, that all acceptable worship is performed, and all true gospel ministry supplied; that this pure and powerful influence, in vessels sanctified and prepared by the Divine hand, is the essential qualification for that work; and that as the gift is Divine, the service is freely and faithfully to be discharged, without any view to reward from man.—1757.

It is the prerogative of the blessed Head of the Church to dispense to whomsoever he will, those gifts which he designs to be occupied for its edification. When, by the transforming power of his grace, he has prepared any for his service, and bestowed on them a gift in the ministry, such having freely received it from Him, feel themselves bound as freely to dispense that with which they are entrusted; having nothing

wherein they can glory; because a necessity is laid upon them; yea, woe is unto them, if they preach not the gospel. This was the experience of the primitive ministers of Christ, whose glory it was, that they made not the gospel chargeable to any. The system of hireling ministry presumes to place this Divine prerogative in the arbitrary control of fallible men, who permit any that comply with their prescribed forms, to assume the sacred office; while all others, however godly in their lives, and however clearly called of the Lord to the work of the ministry, are prohibited from engaging in it. It is a system which does not profess that any renewed Divine aid or qualification is to be sought for, or expected, in the solemn acts of preaching or praying, and proposes to perform them in return for a pecuniary compensation; all which is clearly in opposition to the practice of the primitive Church, and to the liberty of the gospel — an obstruction to the religious growth and usefulness of individuals; and a great barrier to the spread of those spiritual views which constitute an essential part of vital religion.

There is no testimony for which the early members of our Society suffered more deeply in

person and estate, than that which they so nobly bore to a free gospel ministry, of Christ's selection and appointment; and there was no class of men at whose hands they endured more unrelenting persecution, than those who arrogated to themselves the ministerial office, and would not tolerate a religion which struck at the very root of the system from which they derive their power and their support.

However men may have changed, the system remains the same. Our testimony against it has lost none of its force or its obligation. Those who slight or baulk it, are trampling upon the sufferings of our worthy predecessors, and going back into the bondage to carnal ordinances, out of which they were redeemed. Such we believe will suffer loss in a spiritual sense; disqualifying themselves for the performance of that worship which is in spirit and in truth, and which only is acceptable to the Father, and are in danger of settling into lukewarmness and cold formality.

It is our affectionate and earnest desire that all our members may be afresh incited to watchfulness and a godly zeal, in reference to this important testimony; and carefully abstain from

places where a hireling ministry is exercised; and where any are so unguarded as to give cause for uneasiness on this account, that concerned Friends should tenderly admonish them, in the restoring love of the gospel, that so they may be brought to a due sense of their error, and be aroused to greater faithfulness.—1854.

LOVE AND UNITY.

Among the gospel precepts, we find not any thing more strongly and frequently recommended by our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles to the primitive believers, than that they should love one another; and as we are sensible that nothing will more contribute to the peace and prosperity of the Church than a due regard to this advice, so we earnestly desire that it may be the care and concern of all Friends to dwell therein, and in the unity of the Holy Spirit to maintain love, concord and peace, in and among all the churches of Christ.

Love and unity being the special badge of dis-

cipleship by which the real followers of Christ are ever to be distinguished, we tenderly desire that they may be always preserved among us, and that everything which tends to rob us of them be carefully shunned; for without them, however earnest our zeal for the cause of Truth in other respects may appear, formality will take place of the substance, and the life and power of true religion be withdrawn. Let every one therefore watch over his own heart, and often examine whether he therein finds love to God and to the brethren his motive to action on all occasions, but more especially when we meet together for Divine worship and the support of the Discipline.

Let a spirit of love and humility more and more diffuse itself among us, and influence the hearts of all; thus every one will be engaged to seek peace, and none be apt to take offence; but each in his own particular be more careful to rectify his own failings and imperfections than curious in observing, censuring, and aggravating those of others.

Dear Friends, seek peace and pursue it. Ye are called to love. Oh that the smallest germ of enmity might be eradicated from our inclosure!

And verily there is a soil in which it cannot live, but naturally withers and dies. This soil is Christian humility — a state highly becoming and indispensable for a being who depends continually on the favours of his Lord; a state in which of all others he can most acceptably approach his presence; and a state which naturally conducts frail man to love and compassion for the companions of his frailty and poverty, yet his fellow-partakers of the offered riches of the gospel.—1808.

MARRIAGE.

MARRIAGE being an ordinance of God, he alone can rightly join man and woman therein; neither priest nor magistrate are requisite to its accomplishment; and as we shall not find in all the Scripture that the priest had any part therein, further than as a witness among others that were present, we cannot countenance any in the exercise of a function which we believe is designed merely to advance the interest and profits of a certain class of men; and which is no part of the office of a gospel minister.

As marriage is an engagement of great importance to our present peace and future well-being, it is much desired that it may not be entered upon inconsiderately, or on motives evidently inconsistent with that unerring wisdom by which it was primarily ordained; which was, for the mutual assistance and comfort of the parties in spirituals and temporals; and that their offspring may be educated in the nurture

and admonition of the Lord; and for the discharge of their duty in their various allotments in the world.

Marriage implies union as well in spiritual as temporal concerns. Whilst the parties differ in religion, they stand disunited in the main point, even that which should increase and confirm their mutual happiness, and render them meet-helps and blessings to each other. Where it is otherwise, the reciprocal obligation into which they have entered becomes their burden; whatever felicity they might have flattered themselves with in the beginning, they have found themselves disappointed of, by the daily uneasiness accompanying their minds and embittering their enjoyments.

The perplexed situation of the offspring of such alliances is also to be lamented. Attached by nature to both parents, their confusion often renders them unfixed in principle and unsettled in practice; or if, as is usual, the sons attach themselves to the father, and the daughters to the mother, brothers and sisters are trained up in lines of conduct diverse from, and in some instances opposite to each other. Thus differing in principle, they are frequently divided in affec-

tion; and though so nearly related, are sometimes at the greatest distance from that love and harmony which ought continually to subsist between them.

To prevent falling into these disagreeable and disorderly engagements, it is requisite to beware of the paths that lead to them — the sordid interests and ensnaring friendships of the world — the contaminating pleasures and idle pastimes of earthly minds; also, the various solicitations and incentives of festivity and dissipation. Let our dear youth likewise avoid the too frequent and too familiar converse with those from whom may arise a danger of entanglement, by their alluring the passions and drawing the affections after them.

All young or unmarried people in membership with us are advised, previously to their making any procedure in order to marriage, seriously and humbly to wait upon the Lord for his counsel and direction in this very important concern; and when favoured with satisfactory clearness therein, early to acquaint their parents or guardians with their intentions, and wait for their consent. Thus preservation from the dangerous bias of forward, brittle, and uncertain

affections would be experienced, to the real benefit of the parties and the comfort of their friends.

And it is earnestly recommended to Friends, that they tenderly watch over the youth, and extend seasonable caution and admonition on such occasions.

Let such of our members be admonished who keep company in order for marriage with persons not of our Society, or with any bound servants or apprentices, without the leave of their masters or mistresses; or who are present themselves, or consent to their children being present, at marriages of those not in membership, which are accomplished by the assistance of a priest.

Improper connections in marriage being often for want of due care in parents, and those who have the important charge of educating the youth, early to admonish and instruct them in the principles of Truth, and impress their minds with the duty of religiously observing them; where there is apparent danger of the affections of any such being improperly entangled, and the care of those who have the oversight of them appears not sufficient to prevent their taking

imprudent steps in the accomplishment of marriage, they should early apply for the help of their friends.

That no occasion may be given for reproaching the religious profession we are making, it is recommended that when any Friends dwelling in the same house have views of a connection in marriage with each other, and proposals on that account have been made and received, that they no longer reside together until the marriage is accomplished. And it is tenderly desired, that such of our members who are widowers or widows, would cautiously guard against making or encouraging proposals on account of marriage so early after the decease of wife or husband, as to manifest a disregard to the memory of the deceased, and want of weighty example becoming our religious profession.

The too ready acceptance of papers of acknowledgment from such persons who accomplish their marriages out of the order of the Society, being of injurious consequence, and a cause of much concern and exercise, it is earnestly recommended to Monthly meetings, that they be careful speedily to proceed to put the rules of our discipline in practice against such

offenders; and when papers of acknowledgment and condemnation are offered, such meetings should be well assured that they proceed from a true ground of sincerity and conviction in the party, manifested by a consistency in life and conversation.

And it is advised, that in the accomplishment of marriage, all Friends, particularly those in affluent circumstances, be careful to set a becoming and encouraging example of moderation; that all unnecessarily expensive entertainments and large companies be avoided, and an especial guard maintained against inviting such as guests who are unlikely to conform to the order of our religious Society; and that all the marriages amongst us be accomplished decently, gravely, and weightily: that the parties themselves, their parents, and other Friends present, do take care that no occasion of offence or reproach be given, by any intemperate or immoderate eating or drinking, or by any unseemly or rude discourse or actions; but that all behave with such sobriety as becomes a people fearing God, and that the company retire to their homes in seasonable time.

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP.

We exhort all to a Christian exercise and zeal in the performance of worship to Almighty God; and as we are not capable in our own strength to perform this great duty, we recommend to a diligent waiting in true silence and retirement of mind, for the renewed sense of the inward power and virtue of his Spirit, whereby we shall be qualified to worship him in an acceptable manner.

Let our faithfulness and sincerity herein appear, by the humility, meekness, and circumspection of our lives and conversation, adorning the doctrines and principles of Truth, as they were declared by Christ and his apostles; those who have been preserved in faithfulness therein, having to testify from living experience, that it hath been very profitable; and therefore cannot be easy without encouraging and putting forward their children, apprentices, and servants to

this religious duty, as well as to other behaviour suitable thereunto.

And it is advised, that such of our members as come late to meetings, or fall asleep when there, or are restless, or do not stay in the meeting, but go forth unnecessarily, or otherwise demean themselves unbecoming our holy profession on those solemn occasions, be tenderly and seasonably admonished.

Let not the smallness of numbers discourage you from constantly attending our religious meetings, inasmuch as the words of Christ remain unchangeably true and steadfast: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And with respect to temporal concerns, there are many witnesses to the verifying of his gracious promise, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." But when remissness and neglect of attending meetings for worship have prevailed, it hath been often an inlet to such undue liberties as Truth and its guidance do not admit of.

When gathered in our religious assemblies, let us be truly concerned to watch against every

thought and imagination which has the least tendency to divert the mind from simplicity of desire after the Father of spirits, and Fountain of all good; thus retiring to the Divine and heavenly Gift, it will minister to every state and condition though you may have no outward teaching; and will preserve in humble waiting, till it be a proper time to break up your meetings with that decency and solemnity which should attend our minds in such service. Oh that the weightiness of our spirits, and the gravity of our deportment in religious meetings, may be such as to excite an awful sensation in observers! and that at the conclusion, we may avoid trivial or unnecessary conversation: our conduct as well as countenances bespeaking that we have been with Jesus.

They who are obedient to the universal injunction of our Saviour, "Watch," are prepared for the due fulfilling of every duty; and eminently so for that most essential one of worship.

How many feel themselves languid, when assembled for this solemn purpose, for want of a previous preparation of heart! The mind crowded with thoughts of outward things, or freely conversing on them when we approach

the place for public worship, and resuming them with avidity on our return, we are not likely to fill up the interval to profit; and to such, their meeting together may prove a form, as empty as any of those out of which we believe Truth called our forefathers, and still calls us.

Dear Friends, keep all your meetings in the authority, wisdom, and power of Truth, and the unity of the blessed Spirit; and the God of peace be with you.—1808.

The true and acceptable worship of Almighty God, and a pure gospel ministry, are duties and services of unspeakable importance to the welfare and preservation of our religious Society in the life and power, and practice of godliness. We have been brought to feel deeply under the fear that through the enervating influences of the spirit of the world, the zeal of many has grown cold, and their practice dwindled into little more than the form of going to their meetings once a week, in others not so often, while some almost totally neglect them.

If all our members were concerned for their own salvation, so that it was the object of their first and most earnest pursuit, under the guid-

ance of the Holy Spirit, we believe they could not be easy to stay away from their religious meetings, but would feel constrained to endeavour to surmount all obstacles, in order to present themselves with their brethren and sisters, for the performance of this solemn duty. We think there cannot be found among us a truly awakened individual, who, if able, is not impelled from a sense of religious duty to attend our meetings for Divine worship, and that wherever there is a wilful neglect of them, it is an evidence that such have gone from the Truth, and are in bondage to the hard taskmaster, who is leading them further and further into insensibility of heart, which if not arrested, must terminate in spiritual blindness, and the utter forsaking of the living God.—1853.

The testimony borne by our religious Society, from its first rise, to the spiritual nature of all acceptable worship; that it is not dependent on any thing which one man can do for another, but must be performed by each soul for itself, through Christ Jesus our holy Mediator, and that it is equally attainable in a state of true silence, as when there is vocal utterance; is,

we believe, very important to be faithfully and publicly upheld, in this day of abundant activity, and of dependence on outward performances.

Those who come to their religious meetings under a sense of their needs; and when there, really hunger and thirst for the bread and water of life; will, in the Lord's time, know their souls to be refreshed and comforted; and, having tasted of the preciousness of inward and spiritual communion with Him, they will not only have no desire to attend at places where there are formal stated services, under the character of worship; but will feel themselves religiously restrained from violating our Christian testimony against a man-made and hireling ministry, and to the supremacy and all-sufficiency of Christ in his church, as well as to that worship which is in spirit and in truth.—1863.

Fervent are our desires for all our members, however small may be the number, who thus come together for the solemn purpose of offering adoration to the Most High, that, humbly relying on the Great High Priest of our profession for ability to appear with acceptance

before Him, they may wait, in the silence of all flesh, for the arising of a sense of his presence and power, and know Him to feed them with the food convenient for them. Then indeed would our meetings be held in the power of God, and while tending to build up on our most holy faith, would hold out a living invitation to others to come and have fellowship with us; for they would be made sensible that our fellowship was with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.—1875.

MINISTERS AND ELDERS.

It is our earnest desire, that ministers and elders may be as nursing fathers and mothers to those that are young in the ministry, and with all care and diligence advise, admonish, and if they see occasion, reprove them in a tender and Christian spirit, according to the rules of our discipline and counsel of Friends in that respect; also exhort them frequently to read the Holy Scriptures, and reverently to seek the mind of the Spirit of Truth, to open the mysteries thereof, that, abiding in a simple and patient submission to the will of God, and keeping down to the openings of Divine love and life in themselves, they may witness a gradual growth in their gifts, and be preserved from extending their declarations further than they find the life and power of Truth to bear them up.—1723.

As the occasion of our religious meetings is solemn, a care should ever be maintained to

guard against everything that would tend to disorder or confusion therein. When any think they have aught against what is publicly delivered in those meetings, they should speak to the party privately and in an orderly manner. And if any shall oppose a ministering Friend in his or her preaching or exhortation, or keep on the hat, or show any remarkable dislike to such when engaged in prayer, let them be speedily admonished in such manner as may be requisite, unless the person against whom the uneasiness is expressed, has been disowned by a Monthly meeting, or his or her public appearances have been disapproved by the elders.—1719.

It is desired that Friends, when abroad on religious visits, may humbly and steadily abide under the weight of the concern which drew them out on this important embassy, and in which the meetings they are respectively members of, have united; that using due diligence in endeavouring to fulfil the service, and thus seasonably returning to their families and friends at home, their exemplary care and tender regard to the comely order of our religious Society, may have a salutary influence.—1834.

We tenderly recommend faithful Friends, and especially ministers and elders, to watch over the flock of Christ in their respective places and stations, always approving themselves by their pious examples, in conversation and conduct, to be such as faithfully and diligently walk agreeably to the testimony of the blessed Truth, whereunto the Lord hath gathered us in this his gospel day.—1755.

MODERATION AND TEMPERANCE.

It is affectionately recommended, that Friends be careful to use moderation on account of marriages, births, burials, and on all other occasions; conformably to the pure Truth, which leads into great circumspection, and would preserve from giving any just cause of offence or stumbling to any. On the other hand, a conduct and practice assimilated to the maxims and fashions of the world, not only evinces our own individual unfaithfulness to the salutary restrictions of the principle we make profession of, but is an ob-

struction to the progress of reformation, promotes various evils, and tends to obscure that light, and lessen the precious savour which our example should be a means of diffusing among men, agreeably to the exhortation of the holy apostle, "Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand." Phil. iv. 5. And as the All-seeing Eye beholds our thoughts, and views us in all our ways and actions, what manner of men ought we to be in all godliness of life, and sobriety of deportment.—1808.

As the true Christian life is the fruit of the inward sanctification of the heart by the spirit and power of Christ Jesus, so we believe that they who experience this blessed work in themselves, will be redeemed from the pride and vanity of the world, and the practices which grow out of them, and be brought into the simplicity and self-denial enjoined by Him who was himself "meek and lowly of heart." Minds which are happily bent upon seeking a more glorious and enduring inheritance than temporal enjoyments can give, will have little relish for the fashions, the grandeur, or the empty compliments of a world that lieth in wickedness, but

will be striving to fulfil the injunction of the apostle, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God" concerning you.

But, dear Friends, it is with sorrow we observe that many, under our name, in this day of outward ease and prosperity, wherein the means of indulging pride and ambition are easily obtained, have swerved from that Christian simplicity and plainness in habit, speech and deportment, and in the furniture of their houses and manner of living, which the gospel enjoins, and which become men and women professing godliness. It is cause of grief and concern to faithful Friends, to observe how far these things are departed from, and what an increase of luxury, extravagance, and vain show is to be seen among us.

Some, to excuse or palliate their departures in these respects, speak of them as "little things," and of small moment, thereby endeavouring to lower that standard of moderation and self-denial which is set before us in the Holy Scriptures, and which the Witness for

Truth raised in the hearts of our forefathers, and still calls all to uphold. We believe that nothing can be called little which forms a part of our duty to God, and that the disposition to lessen these testimonies, as well as the unwillingness to conform to them, arise alike from the unsubdued will and unmortified pride of the human heart, which shuns the offence of the cross.

It is upon the simplicity of the Truth as it is in Jesus, whose whole life was one of contradiction to the grandeur and glory of this world, and on the heart-changing nature of the religion which he introduced, that our testimony to plainness and moderation rests. And why is it, Friends, that you seek to be conformed to the world in these things, and to imitate its fashions and customs? Is it not to be like the people of the world; from a desire to emulate their style of living, and to escape that mortification which arises from being considered strict or narrow-minded? We believe, if you would search closely into the secret motives which lie at the bottom of such worldly compliances, you would find they had their origin in that love of the world, respecting which it is declared, that if

any man indulge it, the love of the Father is not in him. Oh, then, dear Friends, let us affectionately entreat you seriously to ponder the path you are pursuing, and inquire of the blessed witness for God in your own hearts, whether it is that strait and narrow way which your dear Redeemer trod before you, who "set us an example that we should follow his steps." Suffer him, we beseech you, to arise in your hearts, and plead his own cause; and as you give yourselves up to his leading, He will bring you out of these indulgences into a conformity to his Divine will, strengthening you, with holy magnanimity and firmness, to deny yourselves, and to despise the shame or the reproach which the ungodly world may attach to your humble, simple way of life, and give you to partake of that peace which is the enriching reward of obedience.

It is cause of concern to observe, that some who are themselves consistent in their personal appearance and deportment, have gone out into greater show and expense in the furniture of their houses and their style of living, than the proper sphere of the humble follower of Christ will justify. Besides the inconsistency of these

departures, we would invite our dear friends to a serious consideration of the effects which such a course of life will be likely to have upon their beloved offspring. If they see the parents gratifying a vain mind in such things, can it reasonably be expected that the children will be disposed to submit to the restraints of the cross in their dress and language; or will they not rather conclude, that if the other is allowed by the parents, the latter cannot be more inconsistent for them?—1853.

MUSIC.

We would also renewedly caution all our members against indulging in music, or having instruments of music in their houses, believing that the practice tends to promote a light and vain mind, and to disqualify for the serious thoughtfulness, which becomes an accountable being, hastening to his final reckoning. When we consider that our days pass swiftly away, and that our time is one of the talents committed to our trust, for the employment of which we shall have to render an account in the day of judgment, it becomes us to be living as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, seeking a better country, and to be diligently using it for the great end for which it is lent to us, even in working out the soul's salvation in fear and trembling, and not in vain amusements or corrupting pleasures, but striving that "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we may

do all to the glory of God;" that "God in all things may be glorified by us, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—1853.

OATHS.

ADVISED, that our Christian testimony be faithfully maintained against the burthen and imposition of oaths, according to the express command of Christ, and the injunction of the Apostle James, viz.: "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; but I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne: nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black: but let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Matt. v. 33–37.

"But above all things, my brethren, swear

not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." James v. 12.

Friends in all places are exhorted carefully to avoid electing or promoting their brethren to such stations in civil government as may subject them to the temptation of violating this testimony; and in the execution of instruments of writing requiring witnesses, it is recommended that Friends endeavour to procure such persons for this purpose, as will attest the same by affirmation.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

It behoves all parents and heads of families to be good examples themselves, watching over their youth for good, and early guarding them against those deviations from simplicity in speech, behaviour and apparel, by which many have been betrayed into injurious company and unsuitable connections, and some into an entire renunciation of the religious principles and profession of their fathers. That faithfulness in the discharge of this important trust is well pleasing to the Lord, remarkably appears in that gracious testimony given concerning his servant Abraham: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do: for I know him that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him:" which was indeed to bless both

him and his offspring, and make of him a great nation.

But contrarywise was it with Eli, who, though he reproved his disorderly sons, yet not restraining them when he might have done it, they became "sons of Belial," and signal examples of Divine displeasure.

Wherefore, dear Friends, seeing the Lord hath been pleased in his infinite goodness to raise us up as a people to bear testimony to his Truth, and against the corrupt customs and fashions of the world, let us be mindful of our calling, watchful over ourselves, and daily seeking to Him for wisdom rightly to govern the inexperienced youth entrusted to our care; habituating them from their infancy to the safe and pleasant paths of simplicity and innocence, piety and virtue; and nipping in the bud every appearance of an inclination to the contrary; endeavouring, as their understandings unfold, to inform and convince them of the ground of our religious testimonies; and often reminding them that it was by a faithful submission to the manifestations and restrictions of Truth, that our honourable predecessors were enabled to endure with patience the many persecutions and crosses

they underwent, and were freed from a slavery to the evils we have mentioned — evils, which even those who are bound to them by custom, have often confessed, are inconsistent with the nature and design of the Christian religion, and connect with other improprieties of pernicious consequence. Thus may these tenderly beloved objects of our solicitude be engaged to walk in the footsteps of the righteous who are gone before; and preferring the Lord's cause to all things else, finally partake of that rest and joy, into which we surely believe those dignified sons of the morning are now forever entered.

It is advised that Friends, as they prize the real welfare of their children, choose such occupations for them as are consistent with our religious principles and testimonies; and that they be placed for instruction with sober and exemplary members of the Society, that, as far as in us lies, they may be preserved in a consistency of conduct and demeanour.

Our members are reminded of the propriety of keeping their families, as much as conveniently may be, unmixed; that an exemplary consistency may be maintained therein, and a corruption of manners avoided.

Friends are desired, by all the means in their power, to keep our youth duly to meetings, to dissuade all under their care from the indecent practice of straggling abroad on the first day of the week; and at all times to prevent them from mixing with crowds of rude and noisy people, which are not only interruptive of the public peace, but often productive of mischief to individuals.

Let us who are advanced in years and experience, like wise builders, lay the foundation deep, manifesting to the youth, by our uniform regard to real piety and virtue, that, looking beyond our own dissolution, we are engaged for their present and future prosperity, and are labouring in the fear of the Lord that their minds may be so preserved from corruption, that they may understand their true interest, consider the uncertainty of temporal things, and above all have their hope and dependence settled on the blessing of the Almighty, who, though he inhabits eternity, and dwelleth in the light, yet condescends to regard those whose hearts are contrited before him, and tremble at his word. Hereby the gracious design of Divine Providence concerning them would not be frustrated by our

conduct or omission of duty; and we may be instrumental in preparing their minds to receive the power of Truth, without which they can never be happy.

Ye parents, be solicitous to discharge your important and awful duty with scrupulous attention. It is often too late to warn the youthful mind of danger, when your own negligence or indulgence hath suffered your offspring to deviate from that path of simplicity in which you have thought yourselves bound to walk, and in which you have found peace. If you fail to suppress the early beginnings of undue liberty, how can you expect a blessing on your endeavours, when further deviations at length arouse your attention? and how, having failed to rule your own houses well, can you expect duly to take care of the Church of God? There were of old those who brought children to Christ in the days of his flesh, and now the religious parent can breathe no warmer aspiration for them, than when he spiritually commends his tender offspring to the protection of his Lord; but see, Friends, that you encourage no propensities in them, which prevent a union with him.—1808.

When parents are primarily concerned to train up their children for heaven, rather than to gain for them a character and standing among the rich, the popular, or the honourable of this world, they will not only be engaged, like some of old, to bring them to Jesus, that they may learn of him, but will avail themselves of every means which may serve as a help in the early subjection of the will, and in that discipline of the cross, which so essentially contribute to the future comfort of the child; and, like breaking up the fallow ground, prepare it for the reception of the heavenly Seed. In this important work, the restraints of simplicity and plainness in habit, speech and demeanour, form important auxiliaries, curbing the proud and aspiring dispositions of youth, and serving as an important hedge about them, during a critical and exposed period of life. The same remarks may be made as respects a plain, simple mode of living, and the firm but gentle control which springs up in a well-regulated Christian family, the unspeakable benefits of which many have had gratefully to acknowledge in after years, as having been a means of preservation, however irksome they

sometimes found them to their unsubjected tempers.—1853.

In much love to the rising generation, we exhort them to avoid the many vanities and ensnaring corruptions to which they are exposed. Bear in mind, dear youth, that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and that "a good understanding have all they who do his commandments." Psalm xci. 10. Take the advice of godly parents, guardians and friends; ever remembering that, next to our Creator, children ought to obey their parents; that disobedience to them is a breach of the moral law, and was always offensive in the Divine sight. Submit to their reasonable requirings with cheerfulness, though these may sometimes thwart your own inclinations; and answer them not frowardly or crossly. They watched over you and took care of you, when you were utterly unable to help or care for yourselves. Why then should any of you grieve and wound their still anxious minds, by a conduct which, because of its tendency to obstruct your welfare and happiness, you know they cannot approve?—such as running into vain and expensive fash-

ions; associating with corrupt and libertine persons; frequenting taverns and places of diversion; wasting your precious time in idle discourse, and drawing the affections and inflaming the passions one of another; all which, we have no doubt, the Divine Monitor in your own breasts would check you for, and show you to be destructive of your peace. We, as fathers, beseech you to attend to this heavenly Instructor, and dutifully yield to the correspondent tender advice of your friends. Shrink not from the cross of Christ in your garb, language, or manners; but, through a subjection of your wills to the Divine will, in these and all other respects, walk answerably to the purity of our profession, and the simplicity and spirituality of our worship: so may you be instructive examples to serious inquirers after truth; and not of those who, under a profession thereof, are preferring their own crooked ways, and turning others from the footsteps of the followers of Christ.—1792.

Great is the responsibility resting on parents, and others having the direction of children; and strong are the claims made upon them, not

only by parental love, but by the duty they owe to Him whose heritage children are, to labor patiently and fervently to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, seeing they stand as delegated Shepherds, who must give account for the lambs entrusted to their keeping. We would, therefore, affectionately, but earnestly, press upon the consideration of all occupying these stations, the necessity of being willing to make such sacrifices as may be needful to secure to their offspring competent school instruction; and to seek daily for ability to check, in a right spirit, the early budding of their corrupt nature; to accustom them to a proper restraint of their youthful desires and will; and gently to lead them into an acquaintance with and submission to the voice of their Saviour, in the secret of their soul, that so they may be induced to take his yoke upon them, and, by learning of him, be prepared to enlist in his service, and receive the inestimable reward of his peace. As this concern is maintained, and the counsel and government enforced in meekness and love, and by a daily walk of the parent consistent with the precepts he is seeking to instil into the mind of his

child, we believe the blessing of the Most High will not be withheld, and a well-grounded hope may be entertained that he will see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.—1865.

PARTIES.

We wish seriously to call the attention of our members to a practice, which we fear is a growing evil, of collecting large companies of young people at the houses of Friends, where they are often detained until an unseasonable hour of the night, breaking in upon the order of a well-regulated family, and exposing the youth to many temptations. Such practices we believe are of very hurtful tendency, and require the vigilant care of well concerned parents and others, to check and prevent them. How much of the demeanour and conversation which passes on such occasions, is of a very light and frivolous character, even if it be no worse; unworthy of beings endowed by a beneficent Creator with noble powers of mind, designed to be employed to his glory and the good of each other, and

wholly unbecoming the gravity of the Christian, who feels the responsibility of his high calling, and knows that for every idle word that men shall speak, they must give an account thereof in the day of judgment! How much idle curiosity and evil emulation are often awakened respecting the dress of individuals, and the character of the entertainment, each one trying to outvie others, and set themselves off to advantage, while the excitement of mind and feelings which is produced, and the insincerity and display, prompted by the desire to please, are very uncongenial with the formation of a sound religious and moral character. The great end of society is mutual improvement and rational enjoyment; but we think there are few who attend these parties, but must acknowledge that they are far from being occasions of improvement, or of yielding the mind any calm, substantial pleasure. We hope the practice will claim the care of Friends, and that they will endeavour to produce a reformation therein.—1853.

PLAINNESS.

ADVISED, that all Friends, both old and young, keep out of the world's corrupt language, manners, vain and needless things and fashions, in apparel, buildings, and furniture of houses; some of which are immodest, indecent, and unbecoming. And that they avoid immoderation in the use of lawful things, which, though innocent in themselves, may thereby become hurtful; also such kinds of stuffs, colours and dress, as are calculated more to please a vain and wanton mind, than for real usefulness; and let tradesmen and others, members of our religious Society, be admonished, that they be not accessory to these evils; for we ought to take up our daily cross, minding the grace of God which brings salvation, and teaches to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, that we may adorn the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ in all things; so may we feel his blessing,

and be instrumental in his hand for the good of others.

Our forefathers, and the truly religious in the present day, being through the teachings of the Spirit of Christ, brought to see in the first place the necessity of sincerity and uprightness of heart towards God, and that this awful inward work required great watchfulness and faithful obedience to his commands, they were drawn out of the vain fashions and customs of the world, knowing from experience that a redeemed mind could have no life in them.

If our youth or others should make light of that plainness of speech, apparel and furniture which we have been led into, let them seriously examine their own hearts with due regard to the grace of God placed there; and they will find, that so far as they embrace such vanities they weaken themselves in the practice of religious duties, and expose themselves to further temptations, and more dangerous vices.

It is not a sufficient excuse for such deviations, to suppose that some may put on the appearance of plainness for temporal ends, and from hypocritical motives; for such as these are an abomination to God and good men, and ought

no more to deter the sincere-hearted from an exemplary behaviour and conduct, than a just man should be prevented from speaking truth because others, when they covertly can, may be guilty of falsehood. We also tenderly advise, that Friends take heed that they use plainness of speech without respect of persons in all their converse among men; and not balk their testimony by a cowardly compliance, varying their language according to their company: a practice of very ill example, rendering those who use it contemptible, and looked upon as a kind of hypocrites even by those with whom they so comply. This seems to be cautioned against by the apostle when he advises, 1 Tim., "That the deacons be grave, not double-tongued;" plainly importing that it is inconsistent with the gravity of the gospel.

When you [who are parents] see a libertine and wanton spirit appear in your children and servants, that lusteth after the vain customs and fashions of the world either in habit or outward adorning, and your assistance and allowance are craved therein, without which it cannot get forward while they are under your government; oh then look to yourselves, and discharge your trust

for God, and for the good of their souls, exhorting in meekness and commanding in wisdom, that so you may minister and reach to the witness, and help them over their temptations in the authority of God's power; and when they feel themselves helped and delivered, their souls will bless God for you, and you will reap the comfort of your labour.

Advised, that all Friends, both male and female, be careful that their adorning be that of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price; even as the holy men and women of old professing godliness, with good works, were adorned.

It is cause of grief and painful concern, in observing that many of our youth, instead of attending to the gospel exhortation to be sober-minded, have given way to lightness and vanity, which leading into pride and its pernicious consequences, hath manifested, that though they professed with us, they were not really of us.

Oh! that our young women would cease from all unseemly and immodest appearance in their apparel! Certainly both males and females who take such undue liberties, flee from the cross of

Christ; and if they do not repent and return, they will thereby suffer great loss.

The pride of men, that hath corrupted many things, refuseth the gospel simplicity and natural propriety of speech; being puffed up with a vain opinion of themselves, as if the singular number were not sufficient for them, they will have others speak to them in the plural. This corruption we are informed took place in the Roman commonwealth, when the courtiers, through flattery, sought to magnify the emperor by using the word *you*, etc., which, with various titles and appellations of honour, came afterwards to be applied to private persons.

Seeing, then, that this form of speaking to men in the plural number, doth not accord with the language of Scripture, that it proceeds from pride and is in itself untrue, our ancient Friends found a necessity laid upon them to testify against this corruption, by using the singular equally unto all.

It is our firm belief that it is not lawful for Christians either to give or receive titles of honour, as "your holiness," "your majesty," "your excellency," etc., because these titles are no part of that obedience which is due to magis-

trates or superiors; neither doth the giving of them add to or diminish from that subjection we owe to them, which consists in obeying their just and lawful commands; not in titles and designations.—1808.

We tenderly exhort all seriously to consider the plainness and simplicity which the gospel enjoins, and to manifest an adherence to this testimony, in their speech, apparel, furniture, business, salutations and conversation; into which our forefathers were led by the Spirit of Christ, and in conformity with whose precepts and example, they patiently suffered long imprisonments and great persecutions; being convinced that it was their duty thus to bear a testimony against the vain, corrupt spirit of the world.—1746.

The Spirit of Truth, which led our ancients to lay aside everything unbecoming the followers of Christ, still leads in the same path all who submit to its guidance; we therefore earnestly entreat all Friends to watch over themselves in this respect. The example of our blessed Saviour, his immediate followers, and

of virtuous and holy men in all ages, ought to make a due impression on every considerate mind; and especially on such as have had the advantage of a guarded education.—1743.

We are called with a high and holy calling, to show forth in conduct and conversation, the purity which the gospel dispensation demands, and no desire for change, or any professed increase of light and knowledge, can warrant our forsaking that path of self-denial and simplicity, into which the Lord gathered our forefathers, and still leads those among us who are faithful to his call. Those testimonies are a hedge about us, and a disregard of them, will lay our members more open to the inroads of temptation, and tend to destroy the useful influence which the Society has had in the world. We would affectionately beseech parents and children, to come more entirely under "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom," said the Apostle, "I am crucified unto the world, and the world unto me." Then they would be enabled to "glorify God in their body, and in their spirit which are his."

For our dear young Friends we feel much

sympathy, and a strong desire that nothing may lead them away from the footsteps of Christ's companions; but that they may submit cheerfully to the gentle intimations and restraints of his Divine Spirit in their own hearts, who, as they resign all into his hand, will make his yoke easy and his burthen light, and give them that peace which passeth all understanding, and which no earthly thing can give or take away.—1859.

We are sensible of the proneness of the human heart to rest in an outside profession of religion, and we would not give an undue prominence to those of our testimonies which render us peculiar in language, dress and manners, but we believe that they have their origin in the same scriptural and spiritual views of vital Christianity from which our doctrines spring; that their consistent maintenance has had an important influence in keeping us together as a people, and in promoting the spread of our principles in the world at large. The three are closely connected with each other, and the abandonment of one, weakens our hands for the maintenance of the others. We

would therefore affectionately impress upon our beloved fellow-members, the faithful support of them all, as parts of that consistent system of faith and practice which the great Head of the church has laid upon us, seeking to Him for grace and strength to bear them in singleness of heart for his name and Truth's sake. Parents and others, who have the care of children, having come under the yoke of Christ themselves, will find it their religious duty to keep them to plainness of dress and simplicity of manners; accustoming them to the regular attendance of all our religious meetings, instructing them in the truths recorded in the Holy Scriptures, and watching for suitable opportunities to turn their attention to the still small voice of their Saviour, and the necessity of obeying its monitions, in order to experience a change of heart, and inculcating the duty of their endeavoring to draw near with loving hearts to their Father in heaven.—1872.

POOR.

Practical charity is supported by liberality. Where liberality ceaseth, charity waxeth cold, yea, so far ceaseth; where there is no contribution, there is no distribution; where one is sparing, the other is also; therefore let every one nourish charity in the root,—that is, keep a liberal mind, a heart that looks upon the substance that is given him as much bestowed upon him for the support of charity, as for the support of his own body. Those that are of this mind, will be careful that they do not keep back any of God's part; for in all ages he hath in a most singular manner espoused the cause of the poor, the widow and fatherless, and hath often signified by his prophets and ministers, a special charge to rich men that had this world's goods

that they should look to it, that they were faithful stewards of what they possessed, and that they be found in good works, and not suffer their hearts so to cleave to uncertain riches as to neglect the service God had given them the things of this life for, either to give them up when called for, in a testimony for his worthy name, or to communicate of them to those that were in necessity.

Those who by sickness, lameness, age or other impotency, are brought into poverty, are your peculiar care, and objects pointed out to you to bestow your charity upon, for by them the Lord calls for it; for as the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness of it, he hath by his sovereign power commanded in every dispensation, that a part of what we enjoy from him should be thus employed. The Israelites were to leave a part of their produce for the poor; and in the time of the gospel, they were to lay by a part of what God had blessed them with, for the relief of those that were in necessity, which was not confined to their own meetings only, but upon extraordinary occasions they had a regard to the whole Church of Christ; and all that keep in the guidance of the same universal spirit, will

make it their business to be found in the same practice of charity and good works. They that forget not this Christian duty, will find out the poor's part in the corners and gleanings of the profits of their trades and merchandizings, as well as the Israelite of old did in the corners and gleanings of his field; and in the distribution of it will have a regard to comfort such who, by the Divine providence of God, are put out of a capacity of enjoying those outward comforts of health, strength and plenty which others enjoy. For while they are partakers of the same faith, and walk in the way of righteousness with you, submitting themselves patiently to the dispensation of God's providence towards them; they are of your household and under your care, both to visit and relieve as members of one body, of which Christ Jesus is head; and he that giveth to such poor, lendeth to the Lord, and he will repay it.

But there is another sort of poor, who make themselves poor through their sloth and carelessness, and sometimes by their wilfulness, being heady and high-minded, and taking things in hand that are more than they can manage, and make a flourish for a season, and then

through their own neglect are plunged down into great poverty. These are a sort that the primitive churches began to be troubled with in the early days of the gospel. The apostle took notice of some that would not work at all, and sharply reproved them, saying, "They that would not work should not eat;" and these are commonly busybodies, and meddlers with others' matters, while they neglect their own, and run into a worse way than the unbelievers while they profess to be believers, yet do not take care for those of their own household. Such should have admonition and reproof, labouring to convince them of their sloth and negligence, and if they submit to your reproof, and are willing to amend, then care ought to be taken to help them into a way and means to support themselves; and sometimes, by a little help in this kind, some have been reclaimed from the snares of their soul's enemy. But if they will not receive your wholesome counsel and admonition, Friends will be clear of such in the sight of God; for it is unreasonable in them to expect you should feed them that will not be advised by you, because they break the obligation of Society by their disorderly walking; for our communion

doth not stand only in frequenting meetings, and hearing truth preached, but in answering the blessed principle of Truth in life and conversation, wherein both the rich and the poor have fellowship one with another.—1808.

REMOVALS.

Friends are advised to be very cautious in changing their places of residence; it having been observed that the dissolving of old and the forming of new connections, have in many instances been attended with effects prejudicial to a growth in the Truth and the service thereof, both in the heads and younger branches of families. We therefore earnestly recommend to all, that on these occasions an humble, resigned attention be paid to the pointings of Divine Wisdom; and that before any determine to change their places of abode, they consult with their experienced fellow-members.—1808.

SCHOOLS.

As the right education of children, and the nurture of youth, is of very great consequence to them, and to the succeeding generations, we pressingly exhort all parents and heads of families to procure such useful learning for their children as their abilities will admit; and to encourage them, as well by example as precept, to the frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures, that they and the tutors under whom they are placed, carefully guard them from reading pernicious publications; and begin early to instil into their tender minds the principles of Truth, and instruct them in the nature and necessity of being born from above, without which, our Lord declared, no man shall see the kingdom of God; and in order hereunto, that they labour to bring them acquainted with the holy Seed which is sown by the Divine Hand in every heart for that gracious end: that they may, through the Lord's blessing upon such pious en-

deavours, be induced to place their affections upon it; and, cleaving thereto in faithful obedience, come to experience Christ within, to be unto them the hope of glory.

It is the renewed concern of this meeting, to recommend a care for the offspring of parents whose income or earnings are so small as to render them incapable of giving their children a suitable and guarded education; and as some of our members may incautiously permit their offspring to suffer this great loss, rather than apply for assistance from their Monthly meetings, it is recommended to Friends in every Monthly meeting to seek out such of their members as may be thus straitened, and administer to their help; and it is desired that such will receive the salutary aid with a willing mind, and thankfulness to the great Author of all good.

As the want of suitably qualified persons amongst Friends for teachers of schools, is the occasion of serious disadvantage to the Society in many places, as thereby well-disposed Friends are deprived of opportunities for educating their children in a manner consistent with a religious concern for their welfare; we desire Friends

would attend to this important point in their Monthly meetings, and assist young men and women of low circumstances, whose capacities and conduct may be suitable for that occupation, with the means requisite to obtain the proper qualifications; and when so qualified, afford them the necessary encouragement for their support.

Some in membership with us having placed their children at colleges and other seminaries, out of our religious Society, in order to give them what is termed a polished education; this meeting, viewing the youth of both sexes thus situated, as very liable to have their minds imbued with sentiments and principles which strengthen them in vain desires after exaltation and grandeur, and often lead them from the salutary restraints inculcated by our religious profession, desires that tender caution and counsel be extended to such parents and others, who may be in danger of erring in this way.—1808.

The education of our youth in piety and virtue, and giving them useful learning under the tuition of religious, prudent persons, having for a great number of years engaged the solid at-

tention of this meeting, advices thereon have been from time to time issued to the several subordinate meetings; it is renewedly desired, that Quarterly, Monthly, and Preparative meetings may be excited to proper exertions for the institution and support of schools; there being but little doubt, that as Friends are united, and cherish a disposition of liberality for the assistance of each other in this important work, they will be enabled to make such provision for the accommodation and residence of a teacher, with a family, as would be an encouragement to well-qualified persons to engage in this arduous employment; for want of which, it has been observed that children have been committed to the care of transient persons, of doubtful character, and sometimes of very corrupt minds, by whose bad example and influence they have been betrayed into principles and habits, which have had an injurious effect on them in more advanced life. It is therefore indispensably incumbent on us to guard them against this danger, and to procure such tutors of our own religious persuasion, as are not only capable of instructing them in useful learning, to fit them

for the business of this life, but to train them in the knowledge of their duty to God, and one towards another.—1778—1787.

HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Inasmuch as the Scriptures of Truth are the external means of conveying and preserving to us an account of the things most surely believed concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, and the fulfilling of the prophecies relating thereto; we recommend to all Friends, especially heads of families, that they would, both by example and advice, impress on the minds of the youth a due esteem of those excellent writings, advise them to a frequent reading and meditating therein, and at seasons when qualified therefor, give them to understand, that the same good experience of the work of sanctification, through the operation of the Spirit of God, which the Scriptures plentifully bear testimony to, is to be witnessed by believers in all generations, as well as by those in the first ages

of Christianity; and on those occasions it may be useful to impart to them some account of your own experience. This, under the Divine blessing, may be a means of leading their minds into a firm belief of the Christian doctrine in general, and in particular, the necessity of the aid of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men; which as they are concerned to feel after, and abide under its teachings, they may reap the benefit thereof to their own peace and everlasting happiness, which is infinitely preferable to all other considerations.—1808.

We tenderly and earnestly advise and exhort all parents and heads of families, that they endeavour to instruct their children and families in the doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion, as contained in the Holy Scriptures; and that they excite them to the diligent reading of those excellent writings, which plainly set forth the miraculous conception, birth, holy life, wonderful works, blessed example, meritorious death, and glorious resurrection, ascension and mediation, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and to educate their children in the belief of those important truths, as well as in the

belief of the inward manifestation and operation of the Holy Spirit on their own minds.—1732.

We have always believed that the Holy Scriptures were written by Divine inspiration; that they are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus; for, as holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, they are therefore profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. But as we freely acknowledge that their authority doth not depend upon the approbation of any church or assembly, so neither can we subject them to the fallen, corrupt reason of man. As a true understanding of the Divine will, and meaning of Holy Scripture, cannot be discerned by the natural, but only by the spiritual man, it is therefore by the assistance of the Holy Spirit that they are read with great instruction and comfort.—1828.

We believe a blessing has often attended the frequent assembling of families, and reading a portion of the Scriptures of Truth, with minds

humbly turned to the Lord, to receive such instruction as He may see meet to impart. Many, who are now far advanced in years, can recur to such opportunities in their childhood, as seasons of heart-tendering visitation, in which their understandings were Divinely enlightened, and desires raised after the saving knowledge of the Truth.

The benefit we derive will depend very much on the state of mind in which we perform the duty.

A cold, cavilling, or criticising spirit; a disposition to comprehend the truths of salvation by the unassisted intellectual powers, or by recourse to commentators, who often darken counsel by words without right knowledge; will mar the benefit we might receive; while a state of humble, childlike dependence on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, which gave the Scriptures forth, and only can rightly open and apply them, will receive the blessing, and know them to be made "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—1863.

SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY.

It appears to have been the concern of this meeting, revived from time to time with increasing weight, to testify their entire disunity with the practice of enslaving mankind, and particularly to guard all in membership with us against being, in any degree, concerned in the purchase of slaves from the coasts of Africa or other parts. Having with sorrow observed that in some parts of our country this shameful practice is still continued and connived at, we therefore think it proper to revive the advices heretofore issued; and again exhort our members, to be in no way accessory to this enormous national evil, but to discourage it by all the justifiable means in their power; it being obvious, that wherever it prevails, it tends to corrupt the morals of the people, so as not only to render them obnoxious to the displeasure of the Almighty, but deaf to his warnings, and insensible and regardless of his impending judgments.—1755, 1806.

We earnestly desire that our members generally may use endeavours to promote the instruction of the people of colour, as objects of the common salvation, in the principles of the Christian religion; as well as in such branches of school learning as may fit them for freedom, and to become useful members of civil society. Also, that Friends in their several neighbourhoods, advise and assist them in the education of their children, and common worldly concerns. —1778.

Friends are cautioned against acting as executors or administrators to estates where slaves are bequeathed; and doing anything whereby their bondage may be prolonged.—1774.

SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS.

Many religiously attentive minds having been long painfully burdened with observing the corrupting, debasing and ruinous effects consequent on the importation and retailing of distilled spirits, whereby the intemperate use of them is greatly aided and encouraged, to the impoverishment of many, distempering the constitutions and understandings of many more, and increasing vice and dissoluteness in the land. It is the united sense of this meeting, that well concerned Friends in all quarters be earnestly excited to suffer the affecting importance of this mighty evil, religiously to impress their minds, and animate them with lively concern to exert honest endeavours, by example and loving entreaty, to caution and dissuade all our members from being concerned in the importation or retailing distilled spirits, or giving countenance thereto, and from using them in the time of harvest or otherwise. And where it is

apprehended there may be occasion of using any as medicine, it is earnestly desired that religious caution be observed therein.—1808.

Advised, that Friends carefully avoid all vain and idle company, sipping and tippling of drams and strong drink; for though such who are in that evil practice may not suddenly become drunken to the greatest degree, yet they often thereby become like ground fitted for the seeds of the greatest transgressions; and some who have had the good example of virtuous parents, have, from small beginnings, arrived at a shameful excess, to their own ruin, the great injury of their wives and families, and the scandal of the religious profession they have made.—1706, 1737.

Under the weight and pressure of the deeply interesting concern for the maintenance of our Christian testimony against the trading in, and use of distilled spirituous liquors, that a gradual and steady advancement thereof may in no respect be impeded, Quarterly and Monthly meetings are afresh urged to renewed, patient, persevering labour with such as are in the practice of using, or giving them out as an article of

drink; manifesting, that if continued in by any of our members, it cannot admit of any countenance while there is a faithful adherence to the Divine principle of good will to men.—1796.

SUFFERINGS.

We entreat that all who suffer for demands inconsistent with the principles of Truth, may demonstrate by their whole conduct and conversation, that they really suffer for conscience sake; and keep close to the guidance of that good Spirit which will preserve in meekness and quiet resignation under every trial.

For if resentment should arise against those whom we may look upon as the instruments of our suffering, it will deprive us of the reward of faithfulness, give just occasion of offence, and bring dishonour to the cause of Truth. Cavilling, or casting reflections upon any because of our sufferings, does not become the servants of Christ, whose holy example and footsteps we ought in all things faithfully to follow.—1808.

TAVERNS.

We think it necessary to caution not only the youth, but those of riper age, to avoid the unnecessary attendance at taverns, and that they maintain a watchful religious guard respecting other places of public resort: that they be not exposed to noisy company and unprofitable conversation; or be betrayed into the use of strong liquors, by which so many have been corrupted both in principle and practice, to the ruin of themselves and their families. And if any are in danger on these accounts, it is desired that they may be timely and tenderly treated with, in order to convince them of their perilous situation.—1746, 1834

And it is desired that Friends may endeavour, as far as their influence extends in the community, to prevent the unnecessary increase of taverns, and be cautious of signing petitions in behalf of those who may apply for licenses on that account.—1738.

TRADE.

It being evident, that where the manifestations and restraints of the Spirit of Truth are duly prized and regarded, it leads out of a bondage to the spirit of this world, and preserves the minds of its followers from many fettering and disqualifying entanglements; and contrarywise, that an inordinate love and pursuit of worldly riches often betrays those who are captivated by them into many difficulties and dangers, to the great obstruction of the work of Truth in the heart; we affectionately desire that the counsel and gracious promise of our blessed Redeemer to his followers may be borne in remembrance by us,—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

This meeting being earnestly concerned that the service of our religious Society may not be obstructed, or its reputation dishonoured by any imprudence of its members in their worldly en-

gagements, recommends to all, that they be careful not to venture upon such business as they do not well understand, nor to launch out in trade beyond their abilities, and at the risk of others; especially on the credit which may be derived from a profession of the Truth; but that they bound their engagements by their means; and when they enter into contracts, or give their words, that they endeavour on all occasions strictly to fulfil them.

We particularly exhort, that none engage in such concerns as depend on the often deceptive probabilities of hazardous enterprises; but rather content themselves with such a plain and moderate way of living, as is consistent with the self-denying principle we make profession of; whereby many disappointments and grievous perplexities may be avoided, and that tranquillity of mind obtained, which is inseparable from the right enjoyment even of temporal things; and it is advised that where any among us err, or are in danger of erring in these respects, they be faithfully and timely admonished.

Our worthy ancestors having their eye directed towards an enduring inheritance, and their affections placed upon things above, sought not

after greatness in this world, but passed the time of their sojourning here in fear and in great simplicity of heart, endeavouring thereby to reach the Divine Witness in every mind, and to promote the love of truth and righteousness amongst mankind. In minds thus bent upon seeking a more glorious inheritance than the accumulation of worldly possessions, a concern is maintained to hold forth an example of temperance, justice, and truth; but where a defection from this simplicity of heart and heavenly mindedness hath prevailed, it hath led into the love and pursuit of this fading world, produced the fruits of pride and ambition, and occasioned many wants which our predecessors were preserved from; and to satisfy these wants, some have been excited to enter into a larger extension of trade and commerce, than they had stock and ability to conduct. Ambition and evil emulation leading into higher living and greater expenses than their income would admit, their circumstances thus becoming reduced, and being unwilling to lessen their appearance in the world, indirect means to procure a temporary support have been used, which has ended in failures and bankruptcies. A due subjection to the

cross of Christ would have timely prevented this reproach brought upon individuals, and trouble on their friends; and it would also lead those under wasting and deficient circumstances, rather to give up their effects in due time, than to go on enlarging their debts by disreputable artifices, until they are stopped by unavoidable necessity, and plunged at once into ruin, sorrow and disgrace; with the painful addition of bringing their just creditors into grievous inconveniences, and some into great danger of sinking with them in the wreck of their affairs.

The love of the world is the cause of many deviations. In some it discovers itself in a desire to be rich and great, whilst in others the worldly spirit is as clearly discerned, though the attention seems to be occupied in smaller concerns; and though we are clear that very extensive ones are often in themselves great evils, yet the trafficker in hundreds, unless the eye be kept single, may be as much buried in the earth as the trafficker in thousands.

We are not about to condemn industry, which we believe to be not only praiseworthy, but indispensable. It is the inordinate desire of the mind after worldly things, and the engrossment

of the time and attention, from which we desire that all our dear Friends may be redeemed.

It is recommended that Friends frequently inspect the state of their affairs, and keep their accounts so clear and accurate, that they may at any time easily know whether they live within the bounds of their circumstances, or not; and in case of death, that these may not be perplexing to survivors. And whenever any find that they have no more property left than is sufficient to discharge their just debts, it is advised, that they immediately consult with some judicious Friends, and without loss of time make their circumstances known to their creditors, carefully avoiding the payment of one in preference to another, that so none may be injured, nor any reproach be incurred by mismanagement.

Advised, that when Friends accept the office of trustee or assignee, they be active in collecting the effects of the estate, and punctual and speedy in making distribution.

Advised, that Friends everywhere carefully avoid being any way concerned in defrauding the government of its duties; that so our ancient testimony in this respect may be inviolably maintained.

We warn our members against a pernicious practice amongst the trading part of the community, which has often issued in the ruin of those concerned therein, viz.: that of raising and circulating a kind of paper credit, with endorsements to give it an appearance of value, without an intrinsic reality,—a practice which, as it appears to be inconsistent with the Truth we profess, we declare our disapprobation of, and entreat every member of our Society to avoid and discourage it. We also caution all in membership with us, to avoid entering into joint securities with others, under the specious plea of rendering acts of kindness; many, by so doing, having been suddenly ruined, and their innocent wives and children reduced to deplorable circumstances.

"Be not thou," said the wise man, "one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?"—1806.

We affectionately desire, that Friends may humbly wait for Divine counsel in all their engagements, and duly attend to the secret intima-

tions and restrictions of the Spirit of Truth in their business and trading, not suffering their minds to be hurried away by an inordinate desire of worldly riches; remembering the observation of the apostle in his day, and so often sorrowfully verified in ours, that "They who will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare;" and erring from the faith, "pierce themselves through with many sorrows." Even when riches, to any extraordinary degree, have been amassed by the successful industry of parents, how often have they proved like wings to their children, carrying them beyond the limitations of Truth, into liberties repugnant to our religious testimonies, and sometimes into enterprises which have terminated in irreparable damage to their temporal affairs, if not an entire forgetfulness of the great work of the soul's salvation.—1806.

We feel tenderly solicitous on behalf of our beloved Friends who are engaged in trade or business, and who, in pursuing the means of gaining an honest livelihood, are subjected to many difficulties. We believe the present is a day of peculiar temptation to such. Circumstances of latter time have combined to produce

a state of extraordinary excitement among the trading community, and an active and eager competition, which is not scrupulous as to the means employed to invite and secure custom. Pressed by the manœuvres of this selfish and grasping spirit, and beholding the apparent success which for a while is sometimes permitted to attend it, we fear lest any under our name should yield to the temptation to resort to any artifices or plans, to enlarge their business or to increase their profits, which are inconsistent with the law of universal righteousness, and thus destroy their peace of mind. Strict justice and honesty in all his dealings, and a conscientious observance of the great precept of our Holy Redeemer, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye also even so unto them," are the indispensable duty of the Christian; and the greatest pecuniary gain would be no compensation for the guilt and the sore distress which, sooner or later, must result from its violation.

The standard which the world adopts, and even defends, in its pursuit of trade and its desire to gather riches, is not a safe one for the disciple of Christ. "Men will praise thee when

thou doest well for thyself;" and we sorrowfully see that this praise is often bestowed with but little regard to the means employed to acquire wealth. But we are taught by the Saviour himself, that "that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God," and we fear that it is true as respects some of the modes of conducting business, and many of the schemes for procuring money, which are resorted to in the present day. Earnestly do we desire that all our dear Friends may be scrupulously on their guard, not to suffer their nice sense of Christian integrity to be blunted or benumbed by the examples which pass unreproved in the community, but steadily adhere to that strict uprightness, in all their transactions and converse, which becomes the disciple of Christ, and which so remarkably distinguished our worthy predecessors. How exact were they in the fulfilment of their words and obligations! how careful to avoid all evasive and insincere dealings! and how conscientious not to engage in anything of a doubtful or objectionable character! Their strictness in these respects gained for them and for our religious Society a high reputation, and the Lord blessed their honest

endeavours so that they prospered in the world. May their noble example influence us of the present day to follow in their footsteps, that so our conduct may bring no shade over the brightness of our Christian profession, but that walking and acting in the holy light of the Lord Jesus, we may by our example, commend our principles to those who behold us, and experience in ourselves the truth of the Scripture declaration, "The path of the just man is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—1853.

We believe the desire after large business is one of the besetting temptations of the present day, and we would affectionately entreat our members to beware of being caught with it. "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not," is a language of Holy Scripture applicable, we believe, at this day, to every one who desires to be a partaker of the joys of the righteous. The happiness of man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, but in the love of God shed abroad in the heart, and daily communion with Him. Trade, or business, or speculations in property,

which hold out prospects of a rapid accumulation of riches, often destroy the tranquillity of the mind, and lead to perplexities which not only lessen the desire, but disqualify for a patient, humble dependence upon Him, who is the Author of all our mercies, and whose blessing alone maketh truly rich. May none of our members involve themselves in worldly concerns of such magnitude, or of so absorbing a character, as to disqualify them for acting the part of faithful stewards to God, in the right use of their time, their talents, and the temporal substance intrusted to their care; or prevent them from being concerned, in all things to pass the time of their sojourning on earth in fear, and by daily watchfulness unto prayer, to have their lamps trimmed, and oil in their vessels, that when the solemn close of life shall come, they may be prepared, through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, to enter into the joy of their Lord. —1853.

It is the judgment of this meeting, that neither Monthly nor other meetings should receive subscriptions, donations, or bequests, from persons [who have failed], until they have paid off

their deficiencies, or are voluntarily acquitted thereof by their creditors; for it should be remembered that though, in such cases, the defaulter may have been legally discharged, the property he may afterwards acquire is not properly his own, till he has fairly paid off his former debts, to the satisfaction of the creditors. —1782.

WAR.

Friends are exhorted faithfully to adhere to our ancient testimony against wars and fightings, and in no way to unite with any in warlike measures, either offensive or defensive, that by the inoffensiveness of our conduct we may convincingly demonstrate ourselves to be real subjects of the Messiah's peaceful reign, and be instrumental in the promotion thereof towards its designed completion; when, according to ancient prophecy, the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; and its inhabitants learn war no more.

We desire that all our members may beware of being induced either inadvertently or for gain, in any manner to give countenance to the destroying practice of war.

Many are the ways by which the unwary and the covetous may be caught. But, brethren, look beyond the surface. Behold the depth of misery into which war plunges mankind. Then putting your trust in Him who gives understanding to the simple, and provides for the sparrows, ye may avoid the pollution which is theirs who join hands with this desolating evil. Let all be careful not to seek or accept profit by any concern in preparations for war; for how reproachfully inconsistent would it be, to refuse an active compliance with warlike measures, and at the same time not hesitate to enrich ourselves by the commerce and other circumstances dependent on war.

This meeting fervently recommends to the deep attention of all our members, that they be religiously guarded against approving or showing the least connivance at war, either by attending at or viewing military operations, or in anywise encouraging the unstable, deceitful spirit of party, by joining with political devices or asso-

ciations, however speciously disguised under the ensnaring subtleties commonly attendant thereon; but that they sincerely labour to experience a settlement on the alone sure foundation of the pure unchangeable truth, whereby, through the prevalence of unfeigned Christian love and good will to men, we may convincingly demonstrate that the kingdom we seek is not of this world—a kingdom and government whose subjects are free indeed, redeemed from those captivating lusts from whence come wars and fightings.

As we are called out of wars and fightings, so let them be as seldom as possible the subjects of our conversation; but let an holy care rest upon us, to abide in that Power which gives dominion over the hopes and fears that arise from the concerns of an unstable world, which tend, as they are admitted into the mind, to lessen the trust in that Rock which is immoveable.—1808.

When goods have been distrained from any Friends, on account of their refusal to pay fines for non-performance of military services, and the officers, after deducting the fines and costs, propose to return the remainder, it is the sense

of this meeting, that Friends should maintain their testimony by suffering, and not accept such overplus, unless the same or a part of it is returned without a change of the species.—1755.

A living concern for the advancement of our testimony to the peaceable kingdom of Christ, continuing to spread in many minds, we fervently desire that the members of our religious Society may carefully avoid engaging in any trade or business promotive of war; sharing or partaking of the spoils of war by purchasing or selling prize goods; importing or shipping goods in armed vessels; paying taxes for the express purpose of war; grinding of grain, feeding of cattle, or selling their property for the use of the army: that through a close attention to the monitions of Divine grace, and guarding against the suppression of it either in themselves or others, they may be preserved in a conduct consistent with our holy profession, from wounding the minds or increasing the sufferings of each other; not at all doubting, that He to whom appertains the kingdom and the power, who is wonderful in working, will continue to carry on and perfect his blessed cause of peace in the

earth. A solid attention to this concern is recommended to Quarterly, Monthly, and Preparative meetings, and to our brethren in general; it being the judgment of this meeting, that if any of our members do either openly or by connivance, pay any fine, penalty or tax, in lieu of personal service for carrying on war; or allow their children, apprentices or servants to act therein; or are concerned in arming or equipping vessels with guns, or in dealing in public certificates, issued as a compensation for expenses accrued, or services performed in war; that they be tenderly dealt with.—1780, 1781.

WILLS.

KNOWING how quickly many are removed by death, it is advised that Friends who have estates to dispose of, would make their wills in time of health and strength of judgment, and therein to direct their substance as in justice and wisdom may be to their satisfaction and peace; laying aside all resentment, though occasion may have been given, lest it should go with them to the grave, remembering we all stand in need of mercy and forgiveness. Making such wills in due time can shorten no one's days, but the omission or delay thereof to a time of sickness, when the mind should not be diverted from a solemn consideration of the approaching awful period of life, has often proved very injurious to many, and been the occasion of creating animosities in families, which the seasonable and just performance of this necessary duty might have effectually prevented.

And all Friends who may become executors or administrators, are advised to make a full, clear and perfect inventory of the estate and effects of the deceased, early after the interment, as many difficulties and disputes have arisen, and sometimes injustice been done for want of it, or by deferring it too long.—1808.

Friends are earnestly recommended to employ persons skilful in the law, and of good repute, to make their wills, as great inconvenience and loss, and sometimes the ruin of families have happened through the unskilfulness of some, who have taken upon them to write wills, being unqualified to act in a matter of such importance.—1782, 1801.

CONCLUSION.

Having thus endeavoured, in the feeling of gospel love for our brethren and sisters, to bring into view different subjects which we believe are connected with their welfare and growth in the Truth, and being sensible that many deficiencies and weaknesses exist among us, we desire that each one may humble himself before the Lord, and seek for ability to lay aside those things which the testimony of Truth is manifestly against, and to come up in greater dedication to the Lord's will and service. His mercies are new every morning, and with Him there is plenteous redemption that he may be feared. If those who have been unfaithful to him turn at his reproofs, he will pass by their transgressions and love them freely; and by the humbling baptisms of his Holy Spirit, fit them for the work he appoints for his obedient children in his Church. Notwithstanding the degeneracy that has overtaken many, we believe there is a re-

newed call extended to us to leave the things that are behind, and to lay hold of the offers of his mercy and holy help, and he will qualify us to build up the waste places, to declare of his goodness and long forbearance, and to draw the children by precept and example to take the yoke of Christ upon them, and follow him. Hereby they will know the work of their salvation to be carried on with the day, and we may hope that the Society will again be raised up into the brightness and dignity in which it was originally gathered.

"Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen."

THE END.

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